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MOSCOW, 1911–1933





# MOSCOW, 1911—1933

*Being the Memoirs of*

ALLAN MONKHOUSE

LONDON

VICTOR GOLLANCZ LTD

14 Henrietta Street Covent Garden

1933

*Dedicated to*  
BEATRICE MONKHOUSE

*Printed in Great Britain by*  
The Camelot Press Ltd., London and Southampton

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## INTRODUCTION

IT WOULD appear that as a general rule those who venture to put before the public "still another book dealing with the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics" find it necessary to express their apologies for doing so. After twenty-two years' close association with the countries which now constitute the U.S.S.R. I may perhaps be excused the usual apology for venturing to record some of the impressions which my long residence in those territories has left on my mind. My difficulty in sorting out the large amount of material which I have available and condensing it into the limits of a short book has been considerable, and has been second only to the difficulty of maintaining a neutral attitude in my references to the outstanding features in the vast constructional schemes of the Soviet Government, or in referring to the almost inevitable difficulties and failures with which they have found themselves confronted and are struggling to correct.

I hold no brief for the Soviet system as a whole, but I have always felt it necessary to study carefully and with toleration the efforts and activities of that group of sincere—although sometimes it would appear fanatical—professional revolutionaries who constitute the Political Bureau of the Russian Communist Party, and are in actual fact the present rulers of the U.S.S.R.

Apart from its having been my duty to ensure



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employment for the workers, and profits for the shareholders of the British firm which it has been my privilege to represent, I have found it possible also, during the nine years which I have lived in the U.S.S.R., to do everything within my power to assist the authorities in Moscow in their endeavours to carry into effect their economic plans. I genuinely wanted to see a system of national economic planning prove successful, because I believe that some form of control, by State-appointed control boards working in accordance with a national economic planning scheme, will ultimately prove necessary and beneficial—both in Western Europe and America—in connection with all public services, transport and the supply of fuels, essential raw materials and food-stuffs.

The task which the Government of the U.S.S.R. undertook when they embarked upon the first Five Year Plan was one which would strain the resources of most Governments, especially in the absence of any possibility of raising foreign loans in the world's money markets. In this colossal task they have not had the complete success for which they hoped. They have made some serious blunders, which I have endeavoured to indicate in this book. They have, on the other hand, been strong enough to endeavour to correct their mistakes and their failures, though many of their errors in policy have been so far-reaching that it is not easy for them to find a ready corrective. Consequently millions must suffer, and many hundreds of thousands have already died of malnutrition and its effects. Where the Government of the U.S.S.R. have met with

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failures, they have in most cases sought out scapegoats on whom they could affix some of the blame for their inability to achieve their plans. The Schachty Trial of 1928, the Industrial Party Trial in 1930, and more recently the Metropolitan-Vickers Engineers' Trial, are typical examples of this kind of thing. Unquestionably the Moscow authorities have allowed their political police, the O.G.P.U., an undue amount of latitude in their efforts to compel the populace to comply with the programme of the Communist Party oligarchy in Moscow.

I little imagined when, during the summer of last year, I went out of my way to render assistance to the Soviet Government in their efforts to impress foreign visitors favourably, that before the snows of the following winter were melted I should be arraigned and convicted in the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R. as an enemy of the Russian people, and finally sentenced to deportation from a country whose Government I had done everything within my power to understand and assist. In writing this book I have genuinely endeavoured to resist the natural tendency which exists to show some bitterness at the unfairness and ingratitude of the Moscow verdict.

I have attempted to show the state in which the country was when the present rulers in the Kremlin assumed control in 1917, and also to trace their activities in the task of remoulding the unpromising raw material they found in their hands into a State which they hope will ultimately be in accordance with their ideals. I have given credit to them for

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their successes and I have not hesitated to indicate their failures. For a number of reasons their failures are at the present moment more in evidence than their successes. Those, however, who read this work through to its conclusion will see that I do not believe that the difficulties with which the Government of the U.S.S.R. have recently been confronted are insurmountable. The Government in Moscow will not hesitate to continue to use every means at their disposal to carry their plans into effect. One is reluctant to contemplate the hardships on the populace which this may entail. It is true that those who enthusiastically support the Political Bureau of the Communist Party declare themselves prepared to endure such hardships, but the great masses of Russia's population are not voluntary sufferers in this vast plan of so-called national self-sacrifice which their political rulers are calling upon them to follow in what they believe and claim to be the interests of generations to come.

I feel that it is necessary to emphasize the fact that the opinions and views which I have expressed in this book represent those which I hold personally, and I am aware that they may not in every case coincide with those of the British firms with whom I have been associated during my life in the U.S.S.R.

## CHAPTER I

### RUSSIA, 1911-1914—CONTRASTS

THE WELFARE and living conditions of Russia's peasantry in pre-war days are subjects which have been dealt with by many writers during recent years, and it is not altogether surprising that violently contradictory views have found expression.

There are many who have hailed the revolution as an end to the oppression of the peasants and the industrial workers, and who have pointed to the city of Leningrad, emphasizing the fact that this magnificent city, with its palaces, its cathedrals, its museums and its great educational institutions, has been built in the short space of 230 years with money squeezed from the unhappy Russian peasantry.

On the other hand there are those who realize that whatever may have been the treatment meted out to the old serfs before their emancipation in 1861, the lot of the pre-war Russian peasant in 1914 was not an altogether unhappy one.

My own observations during the years 1911-1914, based on numerous visits to the country districts of Central Russia and the Upper Volga Provinces, have led me to support the view that the peasantry of pre-war Russia lived under conditions which may be described as comparatively good, but that the industrial workers of this period were subjected to

conditions of living and employment which made them an easy prey for revolutionary agitators.

It must, however, be borne in mind that the peasants in different parts of Russia lived under greatly varying economic conditions ; and it is no more possible to make a broad statement regarding them as a whole than it would be to generalize about the smallholders of the British Isles, which include, for instance, the small farmers of the Home Counties and the crofters of Sutherlandshire.

In the extreme northern provinces bordering on the White Sea and in Siberia the peasants were never serfs and may more correctly be described as prosperous small farmers.

In the Archangel district the dwellings of these more prosperous peasants were not huts but were usually four- or five-roomed dwellings built over the stables and byres in which the live-stock of the farms were housed during the winter. The adoption of this arrangement, with the whole of the farm buildings and the dwelling-house assembled under one large overhanging shingled roof, had its obvious advantage during the intense cold and heavy snow-falls of an arctic winter. The houses themselves were constantly cleaned, although they remained invariably verminous.

The life of these peasants of the extreme north was hard, but they were a happy people living a simple industrious existence and having extraordinary little knowledge of the outside world.

The frozen ground only thaws sufficiently to allow of its being tilled late in May, and the peasants must work unremittingly during the short

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summer in order to gather in their crops before frosts commence again in September. They contrived to provide themselves with fresh vegetables and root crops almost before the ground thawed by growing the vegetables which they needed for their own consumption in elevated garden boxes arranged so that the warm spring air had access both above and below the box, thus quickly thawing the soil. The wide thoroughfares of many of these northern villages were characterized by rows of such elevated garden boxes.

In Central Russia the peasants were, as a whole, less prosperous and their dwellings were less pretentious. In these districts the small log houses were almost invariably placed with their gable ends facing the road. Entrance to the house was made from the "yard" of the farm. The cow-houses and winter accommodation for live-stock—small separate buildings with thatched roofs—were arranged round the "yard," to which entrance from the road was usually made through a high gate with decorated side-posts and cross-bar. This "yard" or "dvor" was regarded as the centre of the peasants' life; and in pre-war days any estimate of the size of a Russian village was not expressed in the number of houses or of people but the number of "yards." A small garden, in which asters, phlox and night-flowering tobacco-plant were cultivated, usually separated the dwelling from the road. In every Russian village seats were to be found on the side of the footway outside each dwelling, where on Sundays and holiday evenings in the summer-time the peasants were wont to sit and gossip with their

neighbours, greeting all who passed with the friendly greetings and banter which imbued life in the villages with a certain charm in those happier days.

In the Ukraine and Southern Russia, again, the peasants were more prosperous, many of them being smallholders. The houses were frequently built of large sun-baked mud bricks and had thatched roofs. Not infrequently a mud and lath construction was used. These little farm dwellings were invariably whitewashed twice a year. Shady trees were cultivated near the buildings, and the gardens of the Ukraine villages were always a pleasure to the visitor's eye, and were an object-lesson in the art of getting a maximum return from a limited area of available land.

The Ukrainians possess the instinct for orderliness and tidiness—characteristics entirely absent amongst the peasants of Central European Russia.

Throughout European Russia—in the White Sea Provinces, in Central Russia and in the Ukraine—the interior of the dwellings of the peasantry had various common characteristics. There was always the ikon in the corner of the living-room (and not infrequently in every room), with its ever-lit miniature lamp. There was always also a samovar, geraniums in the windows, lace curtains, an array of family photographs including several stiffly posed wedding groups, and a display of coloured paper decorations. The Russian peasant is strangely fond of bright colours.

Even in the fertile districts of the South, where the climate is much more temperate than in Archangel, the life of the peasant was not an easy life.



THE LATE TSAR NICHOLAS II, VISITING THE SHRINE OF  
THE IBERIAN VIRGIN ON HIS ARRIVAL IN MOSCOW, 1912



THE LATE TSAR RIDING IN THE KREMLIN AMONGST  
HIS SUBJECTS IN AUGUST 1912





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During the summer months he had to work long hours in the fields in order to get sufficient return to enable him to feed his family and his live-stock and to pay his dues to the Government tax collectors. The whole family worked, and women shared the hardest tasks with the men. The Russian peasant women are little short of marvellous in their strength and endurance. Not infrequently have I known instances of women going out to work in the fields, and, after suffering the pains of childbirth under the shade of some friendly tree, walking home to the village when the evening shadows have grown long, bearing in their arms the still unnamed possessor of one more mouth to be fed—in their own words, “one more soul,” for the peasants invariably employ this word in defining the numbers of their families or their communities.

The Church and religious observance occupied leading places in the lives of these simple, hardy, and peace-loving people. The village priest was “father” to his flock as well as to his own usually large family. Sundays and saints’ days, of which there were many, were religiously observed. The old Russian peasant does not, even to this day, count time by the month, but by the religious feasts and saints’ days.

One of my most vivid and interesting recollections of the early years in Moscow is a visit which I made to the Sergé Troitsa Monastery in 1912. On this excursion I had the great good fortune to be the guest of Madame Yakovlev, a prominent educationalist who had the distinction of having organized one of the first private boys’ boarding-schools in

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Russia. The party was accompanied by Mr. G. A. Birkett, who now occupies the Chair of Russian Studies at Sheffield University and whose knowledge of Russian history is undisputed. From my conversations with Madame Yakovlev and Mr. Birkett on this occasion I learnt much regarding the Orthodox Church and its influence on the peoples of Russia in these times. To me the wonderful old monastery, the massive walls of which had proved unassailable to successive attacks by Tartars and Poles in bygone days, was intensely interesting ; but the historic interest, and even the unusual experience of seeing some 1,500 monks at their tasks, at their religious observances and at their meals in the great refectory, assumed second place in my mind compared with the talks which I had with my hostess and other well-informed members of the party.

The tomb of St. Sergius—that mild and quiet hermit of the woods who made the wild animals and the birds his friends—was visited by tens of thousands of devout peasants every year. The tomb itself was in one of the smaller churches of the monastery—the Church of St. Nikon. The saint's remains had been placed in a silver-gilded coffin with a glass cover, revealing to view his withered features and his hands. The walls of the little chapel were decorated with heavily gilded ikons and a massive golden candelabra hung before the shrine. Many hundreds of thin beeswax votive candles, placed by the pilgrims before the shrine and the ikons, provided an effective and not unpleasant light in the otherwise rather badly illuminated building. Our guide—a lay brother—told us that

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the gold and precious stones in this little chapel were of fabulous value. The exact figure which he named does not remain in my mind, but the whole scene—the brilliantly arrayed priest standing in constant vigil over the withered remains of the saint, swinging his incensory as he marshalled the pilgrims forward to kiss the glass lid of the coffin and deposit their coins in the offertory boxes, the gilded chapel with its vast wealth of gold and precious stones and even the oppressive incense-laden atmosphere of the badly ventilated place—struck me as being strangely in contrast with the delightfully simple and open-air life of the woods which history and legend attribute to the devout saint in whose honour the great monastery was built.

It seemed to me that what we saw here was symbolic of the whole Christian Church in Russia in those days. The Orthodox Church had surrounded the fundamental teachings of its Founder with such a mass of ritual and superstition that much of their original simplicity and beauty was completely lost by the majority of those who professed Christianity. It may be argued that this is unfortunately true of most religions and of many Churches, but the Church in pre-war Russia, although it certainly supplied spiritual comfort and satisfaction to the illiterate people, had nevertheless been utilized for many hundreds of years as a governing weapon by successive autocratic temporal rulers of the land, and its observances had been converted to this end. The Tsar was head of the Orthodox Church and the priests taught their flocks to reverence him as their "little father." Every civic

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or State occasion in the life of the country was made an excuse for religious display to an extent which was foreign to the ordinary British mind.

During the years immediately preceding the war this close inter-relation of religious observance and State politics was perhaps more pronounced than in earlier days, due to the intensely religious atmosphere which surrounded the life of the Imperial family at Tsarskoe Selo. One has but to visit the so-called palace, in which the last of the Romanovs lived in a state bordering on retirement, to realize how the religious fervour of the late Empress dominated the household and all who were in contact with the Court. The bedroom which Nicholas II and his Tsarina occupied during the closing years of their reign is a small room, the furnishings of which would not attract undue attention in any middle-class home of the Victorian period, but the eight hundred ikons which decorate its walls are the most eloquent evidence of the late occupants' complete domination by the Church's ritual and customs. It is not necessary to dwell on the influence which the infamous Siberian monk, Rasputin, possessed over the Empress, but it has always appeared to me that one can hardly be surprised at the implicit obedience of the illiterate populace to the instructions and teachings of their priests, many of whom were honest Christian men, when they had before them the example of the Imperial Court of St. Petersburg dominated by the monk, at the very mention of whose name decent people turned in disgust.

The impressive ritual of the Orthodox Church

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ceremonies appealed to the entirely untutored minds of the peasants. The manner in which superstition and superstitious observance had become interwoven into religious beliefs and practices was singularly striking. Every dweller in pre-war Russia has seen the processions headed by the village priests solemnly proceeding round the fields in spring-time invoking blessings on the crops. In the minds of those who took part, there was a dual reason for these ceremonies—firstly to invoke a blessing on the crops which they had sown, and secondly to ensure protection of the ripening crops from the depredations of gnomes, imps and other representatives of the dark powers who might endeavour to rob them of the fruits of their labour. The peasants firmly believed in nymphs and fairies, and many strange customs were centred round their superstitious beliefs. As an instance of their peculiar fear of dead animals I may here cite an incident which occurred in our own house when I was living in the country some miles east of Moscow in 1914. A mouse had been drowned in a bucket which was normally used when washing the floors and steps of the house. The next morning the kitchen floor had been washed as usual, before our old cook—a typical illiterate peasant from near Nijni Novgorod—became acquainted with the fact that the bucket had been thus defiled. However, when she did realize what had occurred, nothing would persuade her to utilize the kitchen or anything in it until she had invited a local priest to purge and bless the place—a little ceremony my wife and I watched with the greatest interest.

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The food of the peasants was simple. In the days before 1914 red meat was not a regular item of their diet, and its place was taken very frequently by raw herring and smoked fish. Black rye bread and buckwheat porridge supplied their need for cereals. Tea was drunk several times a day, and vodka made its appearance on holidays and feast-days. This simple diet contrasted strangely with the gargantuan feasts of the merchants and the noblemen of the cities, to which reference will be made later.

In the winter-time the people of the villages suffered enforced idleness, although many were engaged in the village home industries whilst others went into the cities as cabmen or worked as casual labourers.

Village life was to a certain extent communal. The whole village came under the authority of the village elders. The younger men who went to work in the industrial towns were called upon to return some part of their earnings to the village as a compensation for not having taken their share in the tilling of the land. Failure to comply with this requirement frequently resulted in the village elders refusing to renew the delinquent's yearly passport, so that he could no longer live away from his village and was forced by the passport laws of the country to return.

In the foregoing I have endeavoured to give some indication of the pre-war life of the peasants in the European part of the territory which now constitutes the U.S.S.R. It must, however, be remembered that of the pre-war peasant population of this territory, approximately 28 per cent were

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not Russians or Ukrainians, and, with the exception of the Georgians and the Armenians, were in fact for the most part not Christians. Tartars, Turks, Kirghiz, Uzbeks, Buryats, Yakuts and nearly two hundred other small nations and tribes, scattered in the more remote districts of the eight and a quarter million square miles which the U.S.S.R. measures, went to make up the population of 139,700,000 which this vast territory had in 1914. (Note.—This figure does not include Poland and the Baltic States, which have been separated from the U.S.S.R.)

Until March 3rd, 1861, the agricultural population of the greater part of European Russia were serfs. On this date the Tsar Alexander II, who is reported to have said that "it is better to abolish serfdom from above than to wait until it begins to be abolished from below," signed the Act by which the serfs became free men and were given their plots of land, for which they were called upon to pay on a system of deferred payments extending over 49 years. From this date began an uneven fight between the peasant proprietors and the big landlords. County Associations or Zemstvos were formed to control the various public services, but the peasants were never allowed sufficient representation to be able to make their influence properly felt. During the reactionary reign of Alexander III, legislation was introduced which robbed the peasants of many of the advantages which their emancipation had given them. The County Associations became closely associated with the State administration and were not permitted the freedom



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of action they had been promised originally. An industrial development policy was put into active operation, involving the introduction of foreign capital and the imposition of heavy tariffs. This lowered the home price of wheat so seriously as to render it almost impossible for the peasant to pay his taxes.

Following the emancipation of the serfs, the landed proprietors were unable to maintain the luxurious establishments which readers of Tolstoi and other Russian authors of the period are wont to associate with Imperial Russia. Nevertheless, even in the years immediately preceding the war the *pomeishiks*, as the landed proprietors were called, lived in considerable luxury, and many were able to maintain their town houses in the capital at St. Petersburg, where they spent their winter months. The majority of these *pomeishiks* did not lead an idle existence. They were, for the most part, energetic and good farmers. This particularly applies in the southern grain-growing areas, and it is the absence of the grain production for which the *pomeishiks* were previously responsible that has forced the Soviet Government to proceed with the development of State grain-producing farms on a very large scale.

My own work seldom brought me into contact with landed proprietors, but my contact with the peasants led me to form the opinion that they did not bear the *pomeishiks* of their districts the ill will which revolutionary agitators appear to consider it natural they should have done. It is my conviction that the majority of the acts of violence ostensibly

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committed by the peasants against the *pomeishiks* during the revolution were the work of disaffected and demoralized ex-soldiers who had returned from the war fronts, and who committed the acts attributed to them under the influence of political agitators. I can imagine the majority of the older peasants looked on in alarm and surprise, crossed themselves devotedly and proceeded with their own tasks. In many instances, I know this to have been the case.

The larger *pomeishiks*—the titled families and the nobility—were able to maintain their great country estates and their palatial dwellings right up to the revolution, although in many cases they had largely augmented their incomes by investments in Russia's rapidly growing industrial enterprises.

In Moscow and at the great fair at Nijni Novgorod one met another type: the wealthy merchants—dealers in sugar, grain, furs and other commodities, and prosperous textile manufacturers, whose family-owned businesses had rapidly developed from village industries to vast industrial concerns employing many thousands of workers. It was these men—the merchants and industrial magnates—and not the impoverished landowners who made Moscow's night restaurants famous for the lavish entertainments and the huge feasts of pre-war days. On more than one occasion I was invited to share in such feasts. I remember one at which the Deputy Minister of Communications (Railways) was present. We sat down at 2 p.m. with some two gallons of caviare placed before us, served in a block of ice rudely shaped to represent a brown bear. Vodka flowed

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freely ; we drank the usual series of toasts, referred to respectively as : one for luck—a pair—trinity—a house has four corners—five fingers on a hand, etc., etc., and proceeded through the whole range of cold and then hot *hors d'œuvres* until the real dinner started at 4.30 p.m. It was 8 p.m. before the guests staggered off to their rooms to rest. At 11 p.m. they reassembled, and from my room, where I was working on some urgent correspondence, I could hear their conversation far into the night. Some days later, I spent the greater part of a night in a peasant's dwelling. We had some very good raw herring, vodka, buckwheat porridge, wild strawberries and a thick milk custard served in an earthenware pot. What a contrast ! And yet the same series of toasts were drunk—the same idea of lavishly entertaining to the fullest measure which the purse permits, so characteristic of Russians, was there. At the latter feast the village priest joined us, intensely proud of a few words of English which he knew, and not averse to “slipping in an extra one” when the vodka bottle circulated slowly.

In 1912 I had the good fortune to be in Moscow when Nicholas II visited the city officially for the first time since his coronation some fifteen years earlier. The occasion was the centenary of the victory which the armies of Alexander I, assisted by the rigour of a Russian winter, won over Napoleon. On this occasion, although the reception which he received had every appearance of being whole-hearted and enthusiastic, the strictest precautions were taken to ensure that only trusted individuals should be in the streets and squares

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through which he passed. It so happened that my office was in a block of buildings overlooking the Red Square, and hence I had to provide myself with a special pass to enable me to get to business. By chance rather than good management, on the morning of his arrival I happened to be alongside the Shrine of the Iberian Virgin when his carriage stopped there to allow him to make his devotions before the most sacred picture. This was always his first act on arrival in Moscow and before entering the Kremlin. A few moments before the royal carriage appeared a typical incident occurred. Two plain-clothes officers stepped up to me and one relieved me of a small parcel I was carrying, keeping the parcel in his hand until the procession had passed. The whole week was made the occasion for military and religious display. From my window I watched a great service of thanksgiving in the Red Square. The Tsar was present with all his Court in full uniform, and five hundred brightly arrayed priests chanted the responses. It was a wonderful spectacle. That evening I attended a gala performance in Moscow's Grand Opera House, at which twelve tableaux depicting the events of 1812 were presented. The whole Court was in attendance, and the wealth of dress and jewellery displayed made the scene appear more like an enactment of a fairy-tale than a reality.

Another sight which will for ever remain in my mind was one which I saw a few days before the royal visit commenced. I had been working most of the night on some test work in one of the Moscow tramway substations and was walking home at

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4 a.m. Turning a corner near the Central Telegraph Office, I met a procession of degraded and miserable humanity which baffles description. Herded together like sheep, many of them with hardly sufficient clothing to cover them decently and almost all bearing the usual signs of chronic alcoholism, this melancholy throng shuffled along, shepherded by twelve policemen. There must have been five hundred persons, including many women and some children. I turned to a telegraph messenger, and asked him what the procession might be. His reply was, "Bezpassportni" ("Passportless"), and after a moment's pause he added, "Cleaning up the Thieves' Market, I suppose, before little Nicholas comes." I had not until then heard of the Thieves' Market, but later on the same day I proceeded out of curiosity to visit it. It was difficult to believe that the procession I had seen earlier in the day had been assembled from this district, because the place was still teeming with terrible examples of the degeneracy which follows in the wake of chronic alcoholism. The pavements outside the filthy State spirit shops were literally strewn with the half-naked bodies of unconscious and also painfully conscious "drunks." I went quickly through the cobbled square, for it was not a place in which one wished to remain.

In my student days I did some social work in what was then considered to be one of England's worst slums, but I never encountered such awful filth and degeneracy as I saw in the Thieves' Market in Moscow.

## CHAPTER II

### RUSSIA, 1911-1914—INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

UNTIL THE REIGN of Alexander II (1855-1881) the populace of Russia had been largely dependent on the village industries for such manufactured commodities as their simple existence made necessary. Large-scale industry as we know it, did not commence to establish itself until the period of great reforms which Alexander II himself instigated.

Many of the old landed proprietors, finding themselves impoverished by the conditions which followed the emancipation of the serfs, turned to industrial development as a means of re-establishing their waning fortunes. Banks were formed for financing industrial enterprises, and a system of protective tariffs was instituted to protect young and developing industries. At the end of Alexander II's reign, approximately three-quarters of a million work-people were employed in industrial developments in Russia. During the reign of Alexander III (1881-1894) considerable foreign capital was introduced and industry continued to grow.

The first twenty years of Nicholas II's reign (i.e. 1894-1914) saw further and intensive industrial development, particularly in connection with transport and the manufacture of supplies for the armies during the Russo-Japanese War. From 1896

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onwards, Russia produced the whole of its own railway locomotives and rolling stock for its rapidly extending railway system. Legislation, passed by the Imperial Government, made it imperative that contracts for railway materials and machinery should be placed with Russian firms, and thus it was that many large works devoted to this class of engineering, sprang into existence.

The following table gives some idea of the magnitude of these enterprises in July 1914.

Name of Works	Capital £	No. of Employees 1914
Kolomna Machine Works, including Koolibak Blast Furnaces (1886)	—	9,250
Sormovo Iron, Steel, and Mechanical Works (1849)	1,050,000	9,750
Putilov Works	1,260,000	7,200
Briansk Rail, Iron, and Mechanical Works (1873)	—	6,050
Watkins Locomotive, Shipbuilding, and Iron Works (1759)	—	5,000
Russo-Baltic Car Works (1874)	420,000	3,300
Nevski Shipbuilding and Mechanical Works (1891)	896,900	3,250
Hartmann Russian Engineering Works at Lugansk (1896)	945,000	3,150
Donetz Iron and Steel Works (1891)	472,500	2,250
Russian Locomotive and Mechanical Works at Harkov (1895)	368,000	2,200
Nikolaieff Shipbuilding and Foundry Co. (1895)	1,035,956	2,150
Upper Volga Railway Equipment and Wagon Works (1896)	682,487	1,800
Krematorski Metal Works (1889)	758,625	1,700
Moscow Car Works (1896)	—	1,600
Phoenix Wagon and Engineering Works (1895)	525,000	1,500
South Ural Metal Works (1892)	235,000	1,175
Fitzner and Gampner Boiler and Engineering Works (1880)	515,000	1,100
Dvigatel Wagon Works (1898)	37,800	900
Maltzoff Works (1869)	—	740
Turetski Steel Foundry and Engineering Co. (1897)	117,100	460

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All the works in the above table were employed on the manufacture of railway rolling stock, and, in addition to these factories, there were special rolling steel mills and also extensive workshops belonging to the railways themselves. In 1914, the output of locomotives was approximately 1,400 per annum, and the annual output of wagons and carriages was approximately 30,000.

In the textile industries the progress made during these years was also exceedingly marked. At the outbreak of the Great War, Russia's cotton industry had approximately ten million spindles working, of which three-quarters were in the districts centring on Moscow. The cotton industry alone found employment for over 400,000 operatives.

At the time of my first arrival in Moscow in 1911, the official statistics of the State Factory Inspection Department, showed that 1,951,955 work-people were then employed in Russia's industries. These did not, however, include the mining industries, employing some 600,000 workers, and the railway and transport services, which altogether employed probably approximately another one and a half million workers. These official statistics also do not include the small factories and workshops associated with the village industries. It is estimated that approximately three and a half million work-people found full-time employment in these village industries, the majority of which were run as guilds. During the winter months the total number of workers in the village industries swelled to eight millions. Agricultural labour also was not included in the returns of the State Factory Inspection

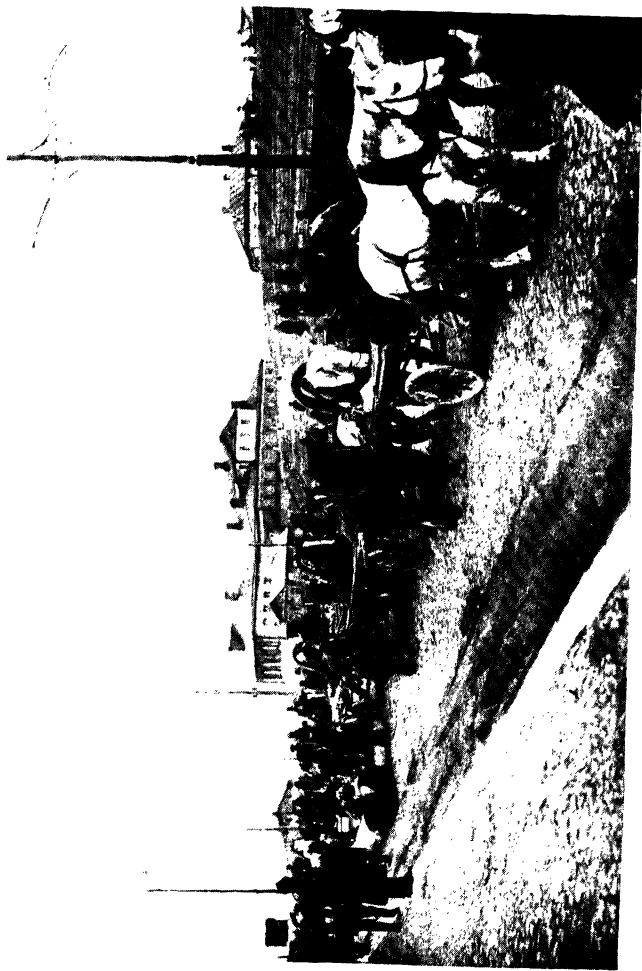


## MOSCOW, 1911-1933

Department. Of the 1,951,955 workers actually covered by returns quoted above, approximately 43 per cent were employed in the textile industries, 16.3 per cent in the preparation of food-stuffs and the fishing industries, 14.4 per cent in the engineering and metal working trades, 8.7 per cent in ferrous and non-ferrous mining industries, 5.2 per cent in the timber and woodworking trades, 4.6 per cent in the paper-making and pulp industries, 3.2 per cent in the chemical industries, 2.6 per cent in animal produce trades, and only 1.5 per cent in the oil industries.

The great bulk of these workers were peasants, and in the majority of cases they retained their plots of land at home in their villages, remitting a portion of their earnings home to defray taxation, and to pay for labour in working the land where this could not be done by relatives. As a general rule, married men left their families in the villages, to work their plots of land, returning home to visit them on the occasion of the great religious festivals and other holidays. During the spring and late summer months, many industries found themselves seriously hampered, owing to the number of their work-people who absented themselves from the factories in order to take their places at the plough and in the harvest fields in their own villages.

The average wage earned by Russia's industrial workers in these days was ridiculously low. I shall not forget my surprise when I engaged my first squad of fitters for erection work on the Moscow City Tramway Contract. I was engaging a first-class charge-hand fitter—a man who to-day holds



A TEAM OF 48 HORSES HAULING HEAVY MACHINERY OVER A BRIDGE IN  
MOSCOW



the position of general foreman in a large Moscow engineering works. His credentials being good, I asked him what rate of pay he required. His answer was, "My last employers were a German firm—they paid me very well—I trust you will not offend me, but pay me the same, one rouble sixty kopecks a day." At the pre-war rate of exchange this was approximately £5 per month. At this time I engaged fitters' mates and wiremen at a rate of eighty kopecks per day, i.e. approximately £2 10s. per month, and the men considered themselves reasonably well paid. The factory inspectors' statistics at this period showed that the average rate of pay received by the workers officially numbered in Russia's industries, was Roubles 214 per year. Textile workers averaged Roubles 171 per year, whereas the employees in the engineering trades averaged Roubles 341 per year. The average pay in the oil-fields of Baku was Roubles 302 per year.

Wages in agriculture were very much lower. Some quarter of a million agricultural labourers annually travelled into each of the great grain-growing areas—i.e. the North Caucasus and the Volga Provinces—from Central Russia, in search of work.

During the early summer of 1912, I made a trip from Nijni Novgorod to Saratov on a Volga steamer. The boat was crowded with these work-seeking peasants—swarthy sun-burned specimens of humanity, sitting on their scanty belongings in all parts of the ship except the upper deck, reserved for first-class passengers. When evening came, three-string balalaikas were produced, and these migratory

## MOSCOW, 1911-1933

land-workers made the wooded banks of the river echo with "Stenka Razin" and other old river songs. Watching them, and hearing their good-natured banter, it was difficult to believe that these apparently care-free and happy people were being forced by economic conditions to leave their villages, and make the four-hundred-mile journey south to the grain-growing districts, there to seek work for the summer, knowing well that the maximum remuneration they might expect for their four months' work would be in the neighbourhood of £7 10s. The average wage for the summer in certain districts was as low as £6, out of which the workers had to feed themselves.

Paradoxical as it may seem, it was the reactionary Alexander III who promulgated the first Factory Acts in Russia, giving the work-people a very considerable degree of protection against exploitation by their employers. Early in his reign (1897), Nicholas II approved legislation limiting the working hours in factories to a maximum of eleven and a half hours per day, and forbidding the employment of children under twelve years of age in industry. In 1903 further legislation compelled the owners of factories to accept responsibility for accidents to their workers, and also enforced the Sunday holiday. The revolutionary strikes of 1905-1906 resulted in a further improvement in conditions, and working hours were reduced to ten, nine, and in some industries, including the oil-fields of Baku, the sugar works of the Tula District, and in printing establishments, to eight hours. At the same time wages were increased approximately 25 per

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cent ; but even then they only attained the figures already quoted above.

It has already been said that a general statement dealing with the standard of living, and the conditions of employment of the peasantry in pre-war Russia, is not possible. It is equally impossible to make such a statement regarding the workers in the industrial towns and works of pre-war Russia.

Conditions in the industrial areas varied greatly, even as they do in Great Britain. In certain of Russia's pre-war factories far-seeing and liberal-minded proprietors made a genuine endeavour to follow the example of Bournville, Port Sunlight, and other model industrial towns ; but on the other hand the hovels in which the workers in the oil refineries of Baku, and many of the colliers in the coal areas of the Donetz Basin, existed were infinitely worse than those to be found in the mining districts of East Lanarkshire. During the winter of 1911-1912, I spent eight months at the Kolomna Works—a large engineering works eighty miles south of Moscow, and the following extract from a letter, which I wrote home at that time to my chief, is of interest as representing the conditions which I found there :

This works is a very large place, employing about ten thousand work-people, building locomotives, Diesel engines, agricultural machinery, river steamers, railway rolling stock and bridges. The Sormovo Works, where I have been working until recently, do similar work. It is a larger place, but employs about the same number of hands. These are two of the twelve great engineering works doing this class of work in Russia.

The works organization seems good, and here at Kolomna

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it is almost entirely controlled and run by Russians, but I understand that this is an exception, and that most of the industrial undertakings in this country are managed by foreigners. The quality of the labour is very much better than I was led to imagine that it would be, and I believe that there is quite a large percentage of the skilled men here who would stand a trade test alongside our skilled men at home. I have had no difficulty whatsoever in securing good men for the erection work which we have in hand.

The conditions under which the men work and live have interested me very much. On engagement, every workman has to be medically examined before being signed on, and there is a rule that, within five days of being engaged, the employer must provide the employee with a "Wage Book," in which all his earnings are recorded. This wage book also sets forth, in detail, the terms of employment, and all local rules and regulations which the employer requires the employee to observe. The employee surrenders his passport on being engaged, and this is kept by the works administration during the time of his employment.

The working hours are from 6.30 a.m. until 6 p.m., with an interval of half an hour for breakfast at 8.30 a.m., and another interval for the mid-day meal from 12.30 to 2 p.m. All work here is piece-work. The men are permitted to smoke in the works, and in the woodworking- and paint-shops, where the nature of the work makes smoking impossible, special smoking cabins are provided, where it is recognized the men are allowed to spend twenty minutes each day. Wages are paid twice a month. Unskilled men make from one and six to two shillings a day, and skilled men in the engineering trades make from three to six shillings a day. These rates are a little lower than union rates at home at the present time, but it must be remembered that food here is ridiculously cheap, and the general standard of living is considerably lower than in Great Britain.

A new Act is just being brought into force, which is very similar to Mr. Lloyd George's Compulsory Insurance Scheme, but it will not affect most of these big works, since in most of them private schemes of the same kind have been in operation for many years.

The factory inspectors here fulfil quite a different function

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from that which they do at home. Here they seem to be State-appointed guardians, to whom the workmen turn every time there is any friction between themselves and the employers. Work-people who claim to have been wrongfully dismissed, under-compensated for accidents or illness, defrauded of pay due to them, or illegally fined for accidents, breakages, etc., immediately take their case to the factory inspector, whose duty it is to take the matter up with the employers and act as arbitrator. In a works as big as this, there is a factory inspector always on the premises.

At this works, the company to whom it belongs have provided a church, a large hospital, an elementary school, technical school for apprentices, a theatre, sports ground, work-people's dining-rooms and a good co-operative store, where employees may purchase goods on account, if necessary, on production of their wage books. There is a guest-house for visitors, where I am living, and special quarters for the engineering staff. Most of the staff have house, light and fuel free, and live on the works' territory. The unmarried workmen live in barracks, but many of the married men have their own small houses.

It must not, however, be imagined that conditions such as those described at Kolomna existed everywhere in Russia. Living conditions in the larger industrial towns, and at works where the employers took no particular steps to cater for the welfare of their employees, were definitely bad. The outskirts of Moscow, St. Petersburg and other industrial towns of Central Russia were characterized by the two-storey wooden buildings in which the workers of these cities lived. These houses were usually arranged in groups surrounding a yard, to which access was obtained through a large wooden gate typical of the farm-yard gates of the villages. The houses each contained some six or eight flats



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but in most cases were without drainage and without water supply, except for a common hydrant conveniently placed in the yard.

In Moscow large shady trees were commonly to be found in these yards, but, except for these trees, any attempt to maintain order or indulge in horticultural effort was foredoomed to failure, because the Russian worker then, as now, has no conception whatsoever of his civic and communal responsibility in regard to assisting such efforts. On the contrary, he will scatter rubbish and litter even under his own window, and allow his children to gather the flowers and deface the flower-beds unchecked. It would seem indeed strange, that these people, possessing less idea of communal responsibilities than probably any people in Europe, should now figure as providing the world with its present champions of communal life.

The sanitary conditions existing in these districts were appalling. The Russian worker's lack of understanding of his civic and communal responsibilities is more than anywhere pronounced in matters of sanitation, and hence it is small wonder that, in these working-class suburbs of the cities, typhoid and infantile diarrhoea took their heavy toll of life each year. During the summers of 1913 and 1914, it was my practice to drive to work daily through the Krutitski district of Moscow, and it was seldom that I met fewer than four or five of those pathetic little processions which characterized pre-war Moscow in hot weather. Two children usually led the procession, one carrying an ikon, and the other bearing aloft the lid of a small coffin. A

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bereaved parent plodded behind, holding before him the little open coffin suspended from his shoulders by white carrying straps. More usually than not, a weeping mother dragged her feet along over the hot and dusty cobbles alongside the bearer of the little coffin and its tragic evidence of the scourge which epidemics worked in these districts.

During the years immediately preceding the war, the municipal authorities of the cities named embarked upon extensive sewerage and drainage schemes, which were being slowly extended to the outlying districts, and this work has naturally been rapidly pushed ahead by the Soviet authorities.

In the textile manufacturing centres, including Ivanovo-Vosnesensk, Orechova-Zueva, Ramenskoe, Serpuhov, Tver, Yaroslavl and Kinishma—all of which towns I had to visit in the early days of the war—conditions of living were again different.

The majority of the textile mills were very large concerns, employing many thousands of operatives. The Yaroslavl Mill, for instance, was at that time the largest textile mill in the world, and had more than 20,000 operatives on its pay roll. In these large mills it therefore became necessary for the mill proprietors to provide accommodation for housing their workers, and this was usually done by building huge barracks in which almost military discipline was observed. Once only did I visit barracks of this kind. It was an oppressively hot summer evening, and the impression which I carried away at the time was not good. The place teemed with perspiring humanity, and I was not surprised when my guide drew my attention to a

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group of workers sitting on two beds engaged in earnest talk, and indicated that their conversation would probably not end in their "passing a vote of confidence in the Imperial Government."

I was told that the majority of the machine operatives in these factories were girls who came into the mills at about fifteen to seventeen years of age, and that experience had shown that these girls lost their capacity to make good operatives when they reached thirty years of age, and consequently very few women managed to remain employed after this age. The pay of these girls was from sixteen to nineteen roubles, i.e. 35s. 4d. to 39s. 7d. per month. Although accommodation was provided for them in the barracks, they had to provide their own food, which consisted chiefly of black rye bread, and on which they expended approximately fourteen kopecks, i.e. 3½d. per day. Men employed in these mills earned about 50 per cent more than women.

Statistics taken at the time show that only 25 per cent of the women were literate, although something like 76 per cent of the men could read and write.

Employees of the railway, the post and telegraph services, and other State organizations, found themselves considerably better off than the majority of those employed in private enterprises. This fact probably accounts for the extraordinary sense of public duty which these organizations appeared to have during the early part of the revolution. Even during the strike in 1917, and the fighting which occurred when the Bolsheviks made their *coup*, the railways and postal services continued to function more or less normally.

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I have in my possession the wage book of a railway worker on the Northern Railway in pre-war days. This book, in addition to setting forth all the usual terms and conditions of employment, states that : " All workers, both permanent and temporary, and their families and servants, have the right to free medical services and medicines." (The details of this clause deal with the formalities for entering the free hospitals, etc.)

" All workers who have completed six months' service are entitled to free transport to their homes in the case of their being dismissed, and also are entitled to free railway transport for themselves, to the nearest station to their home villages, three times per year.

" The children of railway workers enjoy the right to free railway transport to attend schools. Workers who have exceptional ability may be engaged as staff employees, and then enjoy the privileges extended to all staff employees, which include guarantees of permanent employment and full pay during holidays.

" Workers have the right to use, free of charge, the public dining-rooms, baths, etc., which are attached to the various workshops and stations. All railway workers have the right to organize co-operative stores in connection with the workshops or stations where they are employed."

The conditions of employment proceed to name thirty-two days in the year, excluding Sundays, which were religious or State holidays, and on which all work done was paid for at overtime rates.

Overtime was paid for at time and a half from the

first hour onwards. Men sent to work away from their homes received an additional allowance, equal to fifty per cent of their nominal rate of pay. In addition to the above extracts from a wage book, it may be emphasized that the housing accommodation provided for railway workers was extraordinarily good, and, due to its being subject to regular inspection by the railway authorities, always presented a cleaner and better-kept appearance than that of privately owned property.

Unfortunately it is not possible to give an accurate picture of life in pre-war industrial Russia without reference to the excessive drinking which occurred. The sale of vodka was a State monopoly. The spirit was sold, by State shops, in small glass bottles sealed with coloured sealing-wax. The law did not allow its consumption on the premises of the State spirit shops, and hence the outer doorposts of these shops were always scored and marked by countless customers having rubbed the sealing-wax off the vodka bottles before expelling the corks with a jerk of the hand, which dispensed with the necessity for a corkscrew. Having drunk the spirit, the customers usually returned the empty bottles to the State shop, and received two kopecks in exchange, before the influence of their contents began to be felt and incapacitated them from such considerations of economy.

What has been said regarding the influence of the Church over the peasants in the village also applies to a large extent to the industrial workers, because, as has already been explained, the majority of the industrial workers were drawn from the villages.

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On the other hand, it was amongst the erstwhile peasants who had left their villages and become drawn into industry that the revolutionary propagandists and agitators found fertile ground on which to sow the seeds of revolution. The present leaders of the U.S.S.R. are for the most part drawn from the ranks of those who were associated with revolutionary activities in pre-war Russia's industrial districts.

It has been the industrial workers and their political leaders, and not the village peasants, who have held the power in Russia during the last fifteen years, and who have formed the backbone of the party which now rules in the Kremlin.

Lenin frequently emphasized the necessity of the country's comparatively small working-class community maintaining its leadership of the peasantry. In his own words : " We must try to build up a State in which the workers shall maintain their leadership of the peasantry, and the confidence of the peasantry," etc. (Lenin's *Collected Works*, Vol. XXVII, p. 417, Russian edition.)

As will be shown in a later chapter, the present franchise in the U.S.S.R. is designed to ensure this leadership.

## CHAPTER III

### EARLY DAYS OF THE WAR, 1914-1917

THE SUMMER OF 1914 in Moscow was extremely hot, and on the Sunday evening of that eventful day, August 1st, eight of us sat round a samovar on the verandah of a forest bungalow, some miles east of the city, enjoying the cooler evening air, drinking tea and defending ourselves against the attacks of myriads of mosquitoes. Our hostess and her daughter were Germans, and the remainder of the party, with the exception of myself, were Russians, including two young N.C.O.s who were just completing their period of service as conscripts. These two men were typical examples of their class—courteous and polite, polite almost to the extent that would be considered affected in England—uninterested in their military work, looking forward to returning to their careers, one as an engineer, and the other to the management of his father's textile mill. They both sang lustily when the balalaika was introduced and old Russian songs were played.

We had been playing gorodki—a kind of skittles played by throwing sticks, and a game requiring considerable skill and strength. Thanks to my early training with wadis and boomerangs in New Zealand, I found that I could make good progress with this game, and it was natural that the conversation

should drift to English games. I was called upon to describe how golf was played, and one of the two officers expressed his astonishment that men would trust one another not to improve the lie of the ball, if one had been unlucky enough to get into a cart-rut or rough grass. His colleague agreed that to his mind the game required too much mutual trust between players to be satisfactory. That remark made a great impression upon me. Here were two almost typical young members of Moscow's *intelligentzia*—men who had "finished" at good schools and passed through their training as reserve army officers—and yet they were devoid of most essential characteristics. *Esprit de corps* was not in their training—tradition apparently did not exist—mutual trust was limited only to one's closest friends.

On these questions we had argued until the echoing rattle of the last train from the city was dying away amongst the forests, when suddenly a breathless young fellow-officer, trembling with excitement, cap in hand as he wiped the perspiration from his forehead, burst in upon our discussion with astounding news : War had been declared ; Russian troops had already been in action at Kalish and Eydtkuhnen and on other sections of the frontier ; Belgium was being attacked ; all officers must report to their headquarters in Moscow at once.

Consternation and incredulity followed this entirely unexpected announcement. Home-made cherry brandy was brought out, and we drank the only toast we could propose in view of the nationality of



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our hostess—"A safe return" to the young officers who were thus summoned by their colleagues to proceed to Moscow by the next train. I went back on that train also.

During our journey I found the compartment full of officers returning to their units in accordance with the mobilization summons. Speculative guesses were made as to how long this trial of strength between Germany and her enemies would last. All agreed that two months was the probable maximum, and it would not be necessary to take winter kit. The question which everyone asked was, "What will England do? Will the British Navy come into action?" These officers of Russia's Army were convinced that Great Britain would not take part in military operations on the mainland of Europe.

That night I reached home about midnight. Two hours later I was awakened by voices in the vestibule, and found that my servant was engaged in an argument with police officials. As soon as I appeared I was told to get dressed at once and accompany them to the nearest police station. As my passport was already in the hands of the police in accordance with general instructions which had been issued on the previous day, I felt it was no use protesting and accompanied my visitors to the police station. On arrival I was put into a room already almost full of foreigners of many nationalities. It was a small room, and the warm and breathless atmosphere of a Moscow summer night did not tend to lessen our discomfort. After some hours I was called before the Priestaf, or local Chief of Police,

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who told me that as a German I was to be interned. I assured him that I was not a German, at which he seemed considerably astonished, and commenced to cross-question his subordinates. It then transpired that most of the other occupants of that small and badly ventilated room were, like myself, not subjects of the Central European Powers. The arresting party had been operating with the wrong list of foreigners, and, although they had arrested the subjects of many countries, had left those of the Central Powers still at liberty. Profuse apologies were offered and accepted in the circumstances. Then followed three anxious days whilst Moscow's populace wondered what action Great Britain was intending to take. Late in the evening of August 3rd I was on the Tverskiaia amongst the crowd outside the newspaper offices of the *Ruskoï Slovo*, and it became clear to me that if Great Britain did not declare war within another two or three days, the lives and property of British subjects in Moscow were in grave danger of one of those outbursts of public feeling known in Russia as pogroms. Each evening I went to the British Club, where the British Consul-General, Mr. Clive Bailey, and his Vice-Consul, Mr. Bruce Lockhart, made a practice, which they continued during the early days of the war, of putting in an appearance during the evening after dinner and informing us of the contents of the latest publishable *communiqués*.

On August 4th my employers—a large Russian electrical manufacturing company—accepted a contract for one million barbed wire cutters of the type which was attachable to a rifle, and consequently I

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spent most of the night in a conference, settling as to how a contract of this magnitude and urgency was to be fulfilled. A delivery time had been imposed upon us calling for the completion of the contract in forty-two days. Thus it was that the news of Great Britain's entrance into the war did not reach me until the following morning. At noon that day Mr. L. C. Thornton and I reported for service to the British Consul, telling him that we each had six years' volunteer and territorial service as N.C.O.s to our credit, but our hopes of being returned to England for military service were very soon dashed to the ground. Some days later we were summoned and told that we were of much greater service to our country organizing Russian munition manufacture than we would be as N.C.O.s in the British Army.

During the early months of the war, an intensive "drive" was made by Russian industrialists to establish the manufacture of all forms of munitions and war materials. From August 3rd until early in 1915, those of us who were made responsible for actually organizing production in the factories seldom finished our daily work before midnight, and not infrequently nights passed and we found ourselves immersed in the following day's programme of work without having had an opportunity of rest or sleep. Enthusiasm ran high amongst the foreign engineers who organized many of these factories and amongst a certain relatively small proportion of the Russian staffs. The manufacture of munitions and war supplies was entrusted to the Union of County Associations (*Zemstvos*) under the





leadership of Prince Lvov, Rodzianko, Chelnakov, Brianski and others, whose keenness, enthusiasm and loyalty should have proved a fitting example to all who came in contact with them.

On Christmas Day, 1914, I was in the works as usual, and, meeting two of the directors who were large shareholders in the concern, I greeted them with the usual seasonable wishes, at the same time expressing my regret that under existing circumstances I had found it necessary to bring in many work-people on this great holiday. I referred of course to the cry for munitions which was then coming from Russia's Western Front. However, one of the directors stupefied me by remarking that I was not to worry about paying the overtime and disturbing the men's holiday when there was a prospect of the company making such fine profits !! This remark expressed what I fear was the attitude of many industrialists. Their "drive" for production was not entirely dictated by patriotism and a desire to defend their Empire against the Central Powers, but by their avaricious thirst for war profits.

Munition work left little time for recreation or for meeting one's fellow countrymen, and I made it my custom, when possible, to break away from work on Sunday mornings in time to attend service at the British Church, and afterwards take lunch at the British Club. This constituted my weekly break in the work's routine, and hence it was that I was standing in the lobby of the British Club on Sunday, September 6th, 1914, when a bearded British officer, clad in a much-worn khaki uniform, hesitatingly

opened the club door and asked if he might be permitted to enter. After satisfying himself that I was British, he said : " Tell me what has happened—there is a war, I know, but who is in it, and what does it all mean ? " Utter bewilderment was written over the tanned features of this British officer. He had been exploring in Chinese Mongolia, and knew nothing of the murder at Sarajevo and the rapid sequence of events which had plunged Europe into war. Moreover, he had travelled from Kazakhstan to Moscow, some 4,000 miles through Russian territory, and although many of his fellow travellers had been able to tell him that there was a war in progress, not one could tell him why the people of Europe were involved in such a cataclysm, or even exactly what nations were taking part. All that he could glean was that the Tsar had called upon his subjects to fight his enemies, and so fight they must. This astonishing incident is surely sufficient evidence of what the attitude of the great mass of the illiterate peasant peoples of Russia was towards the war. The people of the town and the so-called intelligentsia were naturally better informed, but even their attitude was difficult to interpret. German influences were very strong, and the actions of a weak Government in Petrograd, endeavouring to rule without a Duma, were the subject of much speculation as to the outcome of events.

At Easter, 1915, I was asked by the authorities to proceed to Stockholm in connection with the purchasing of certain supplies, without which it was becoming increasingly difficult to carry on production. This visit was a welcome break, but especially

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so as I took the opportunity to make arrangements for my wife to cross the North Sea to Bergen and bring over our six-months-old baby girl, whom I had not seen until then. Our overland journey back to Russia via Northern Sweden and Finland was full of interest and comic incidents. During the later stages of the war this route became generally accepted, and proper railway and hotel arrangements were made, but in March 1915 we were constrained to make the journey from the Swedish railhead to the Finnish town of Tornea in long reindeer sledges, in which we lay wrapped in bear-skins. The road was far from smooth, and there were times when I thought that the quick jolting motion would shake the head of our child to such an extent as to damage the vertebræ of her neck. It was with feelings of considerable relief that we eventually reached the hotel at Tornea—a favourite resort of wolf-hunting parties in pre-war days.

On my return to Moscow I found that, owing to a reorganization of the works, I was relieved of various executive functions, and from that time onwards my duties were destined to be of a technical-consulting nature. This arrangement left me with a certain amount of free time in the evenings, and consequently I threw my energies whole-heartedly into work amongst the Polish refugees who were then streaming back to Moscow. A fund existed, known as the "Great Britain to Poland Relief Fund," and a small British Committee was formed to carry out the relief work in Moscow.

For the first time I began to realize the horrors of war, and the unutterable misery which follows



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in its wake. Three evenings each week I was on duty with a portable soup-kitchen at the Warsaw and the Briansk railway stations. As a general rule two relief workers accompanied each kitchen, and my co-worker was a young English girl who had been educated in Moscow and spoke the Russian language fluently. Night after night she and I handed out our 800 meals to starving refugee women and children. Very few men arrived on the trains, as they had been held back by the authorities to dig trenches and make defence works. The meal which we issued consisted of a meat soup, containing a great deal of barley, and half a pound of black bread. I found it a hard effort to remain calm as I issued this meal to children who had hardly tasted a bite of food for a week—poor little creatures too weak to hold up their earthenware pots to receive the soup without my co-worker's assistance. She was splendid with these children, and seemed to have no fear of the filth, vermin and disease which they brought. On many occasions we unloaded trains of refugees to find several of them dead from privations and hunger. I particularly remember a train-load of Ruthvians—fine-statured people in drab home-spun clothes, who had come across Russia for six days without food. They were so bewildered that I had the utmost difficulty in persuading them to allow their dead to be handed over to the Moscow authorities for removal and burial. To me it seemed incredible that refugees could have travelled across a prosperous agricultural country like Russia and arrive in Moscow in this appalling state. On another tragic night we had been issuing

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meals to refugees housed near Petrovsky Park—the night restaurant district of pre-war Moscow—when we were told that some Polish families had several days previously dragged themselves in by road and taken refuge in a disused bungalow in the woods. We decided to go there at once to investigate the case. In my wildest dreams of what the depths of human misery and privations might mean I do not think such a sight would have occurred to me as that which met our eyes when we entered that bungalow. I decided at that moment that what we saw was too terrible to recount, and that decision holds to-day.

Sufficient to say we provided for the children that were still alive, and on our return arranged for the burial of the mother and her infant child. Had they but known they were within half a mile of our distribution centre at Yars Restaurant !

It was possible, of course, to understand the apathetic and dazed condition in which these people arrived in Moscow after their ordeal in escaping from the frontier areas, followed by six or seven days' partial starvation, but what I could never understand, and never will understand, was how it came to be that the Russian authorities, and the people of Moscow, did so little to assist. One evening, as I was issuing meals to women and children in the square outside the Warsaw station, a Russian in the uniform of an engineer came forward and asked what organization was doing this work. I told him it was a British organization working on funds collected in London. He promptly handed me a generous contribution to our funds, and proceeded

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on his way, railing at the indifferent attitude of his own people to the tragedy occurring at their city gates. Human beings were dying of starvation under appalling conditions within hailing distance of the great restaurants where Moscow's rapidly enriched industrialists and merchant princes nightly vied with each other in the extravagance of their orgies.

Early in the summer of 1915, the rumours of treachery at the front, and German wrecking activities in Russian munition factories, began to circulate freely in Moscow. The case of Miasoyedov, the ex-Frontier official who had betrayed Russia's fifth army at Kovno, and had paid for his treachery with his life, was cited as typical of what was occurring. Germany's steady advance into Poland was alarming the populace. On June 10th the administration in Moscow issued an instruction that no foreign language was to be used in telephone conversations, and that all German shop signs were to be removed. The following morning an organized procession of rioters set out to put the instruction into immediate execution, and incidentally smashed up all offices and shops belonging to German and Austrian subjects. The procession with which the riot commenced was led by priests bearing holy banners and ikons taken from the churches, and I saw the Governor-General of Moscow himself, seated on his horse, quietly watching the pogrom of a large German business. Neither he nor the group of police officials around him was making any attempt to stop the rioters. That night seventy blazing buildings lit up the sky over Moscow, and

## EARLY DAYS OF THE WAR

many scores of German citizens met an untimely end, trampled to death, stoned or drowned by the infuriated mob. Along with many other British people, my wife and I lived in a Moscow suburb which was made the object of attack by the mob on the following day. The house in which we lived belonged to an engineer of German extraction, and we feared that we would lose our home. A mob of about 500 rioters had already "pogromed" one bungalow near to our own. Suddenly and unexpectedly help in the form of six Cossacks appeared. These men had been sent at the request of a certain neutral consular official who lived in this suburb. Someone raised the cry "Cossacks," and to this day it is still a mystery to me as to where that crowd disappeared.

## CHAPTER IV

### REVOLUTION, 1917

FROM THE TIME of Stolypin's assassination on September 14th, 1911, until the outbreak of the Great War, the political arena of St. Petersburg was the scene of continual conflicts and intrigues. However, the "whipped up" patriotism with which Russia entered the Great War resulted in the majority of the political parties throwing aside their rivalries, for the time being at least, and uniting in their effort to overcome the common enemy. Unfortunately, the Tsar was ill advised by his councillors, and failed to utilize the opportunity which the situation then placed in his hands. He endeavoured to carry on autocratic government and failed to call together the Duma immediately.

The serious reverses which the Russian armies experienced in the field during the early summer of 1915 resulted in the liberal members of the Duma uniting with the Union of Zemstvos in making a recommendation to the Tsar to institute a programme of reforms, which they rightly contended was his one way of saving a threatening situation. Their proposals included the formation of a National Coalition Government. Once again the unfortunate Tsar was too much under the influence of his wife, who resisted every effort made by the progressive parties to establish a constitutional

## REVOLUTION

monarchy, to accept the advice given to him by the men who were at that moment doing more than anyone else in Russia to bring victory to the Allied cause and thus support their Emperor.

The history of the intrigue and treachery of the Russian Court during the last two years of Nicholas II's reign has yet to be fully written. There is little doubt that the Empress herself was largely responsible for the astonishing mismanagement and almost criminal incompetence which ultimately resulted in the downfall of the Imperial Government. On the other hand, there is no doubting the Tsar's good intentions and sincerity, but he proved too weak for the task which he was called upon to perform.

During 1916 it was obvious that the situation was heading for serious developments. Rapid changes in the Imperial Cabinet gave indication of intrigue and instability. Every week the daily papers of Moscow appeared with whole columns left blank, indicating where the censors had forbidden political news from Petrograd being published. Typewritten copies of strong speeches by Milukov and others against the régime were passed from hand to hand. Finally, in December 1916, the Moscow papers appeared one morning with three blank columns. The next day rumour sped through the city that Purishkevitch, Prince Usupov and the Grand Duke Dmitri had taken upon themselves the unpleasant but necessary duty of ridding the world of Rasputin. Two days later it became known that their drastic action was remaining almost unpunished.

With the Christmas holidays over, rumour again began to circulate throughout the city. Early in

## MOSCOW, 1911-1933

January, I had occasion to visit a small factory which was engaged in producing a variety of war supplies including large quantities of hand-grenades. Government inspectors were condemning almost half of the works' production. The slightest scratch on a finished grenade was sufficient to cause it to be condemned. I commented on the absurdity of this to the owner of the place—a typical peasant, who had built up a good business in Moscow, but held extreme views regarding the Tsarist régime—his reply was, "Never mind, perhaps they may be useful later." My impression was that he intended to follow what was, in those days, common procedure and bribe some Government inspector to take the rejected grenades, and I was convinced that this was the case when I saw them being carefully removed to the cellars of the building for storage. Later, however, I was to learn that the rejected grenades were not being kept for use on Russia's Western Front.

During January and early February the police forces of the cities were being greatly augmented, and in Moscow machine guns were frequently to be seen being taken to strategic points in the city. Police barricades were openly prepared in readiness for dealing with riotous mobs.

The food shortage became more acute as the winter wore on, and meanwhile an army of German agents in the country was doing its utmost to cripple munition manufacture and the proper supplying of armies at the front. Railway smashes, explosions, fires, destruction of bridges, and other acts of sabotage, occurred on all sides, gradually

## REVOLUTION

arousing a strong national feeling against the spies. Extremist agitators did not lose the opportunity of secretly spreading rumours—for which there was apparently no foundation whatsoever—that the Empress herself was behind many of these pro-German activities.

Meanwhile heroic last efforts were being made by the progressive elements of the Duma to influence the Emperor to grant reforms and prevent revolution. The military leaders on the fronts became involved, and a political revolution, not involving the masses, seemed imminent, when food riots and strikes in Petrograd gave the necessary impetus to knock the whole rotten structure over. Alarmed by developments, the Tsar made one last effort in sending Prince Golitsin instructions to prorogue the Duma. This was his last act as Emperor, except for the historical signing of his abdication in a railway coach near Pskov, where the representatives of the newly constituted Provisional Government had caught him in his flight.

Representatives of the Duma then offered the throne to the Grand Duke Michael, who finally agreed to accept it if he should be invited to do so by an elected Constituent Assembly.

Thus the first step in the revolution had been taken, and the Tsar had abdicated without serious fighting and without organized participation of the workers' leaders.

News reached Moscow of the events in Petrograd on March 13th, and on that morning I was surprised to find the machinery of the works silent and standing when I entered the building at 8.30 a.m.



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Not realizing what had occurred, I went forward to a large crowd of work-people, who had gathered in the assembly shops, and I asked what had occurred. The reply came in chorus, and in one word, "Freedom." A sheet-metal worker, whom I knew had long been one of the men's leaders, stepped forward, silenced the crowd, and, respectfully removing his cap, explained that a revolution had taken place, the long-awaited day had arrived, the Tsar would be made to abdicate, if he had not already done so, and it was his duty to proceed with his comrades at once to the Town Hall to indicate their allegiance to the Revolutionary Government. He respectfully asked that I should declare the works closed in honour of the great day. I agreed to this, and, as soon as the day's bread rations had been distributed, the work-people left in a body to march to the centre of the city. I then made arrangements with my wife that she should come in from the country to be an eye-witness of the historical scenes. The centre of the city was packed with people. Bursts of cheering occurred on all sides as lorries, manned with armed students, brought in police officials and other representatives of the Tsarist régime, who had been captured in endeavouring to escape, or in hiding. Endless processions of workmen, troops and students marched past the Town Hall to signify their allegiance to the Provisional Government.

About noon on March 14th we were again in the centre of the city, where the crowd was as dense as ever. A long convoy of slowly driven field-ambulance wagons approached, and, as they came nearer,

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we were able to discern the white and haggard faces of political prisoners, who had lain since 1905 in the Boutirka Prison awaiting trial. These men were, at the moment, too amazed and overcome to do more than stare in bewilderment at the vast crowds who welcomed them with deafening cheers.

Towards the evening a wild rumour spread through the crowds that loyal Imperial troops were marching in from Losinoostrovski. If this rumour were true, street fighting was imminent, and hence we decided to get away to the railway station as quickly as possible. Before we reached the Bolshoi Loubianka, we met the troops in question marching in to the stirring strains of the "Marseillaise," and with shreds of red cloth attached to their bayonets. They had gone over to the revolution as they entered the city, and they were now marching into the Town Hall to swear allegiance to the Provisional Government.

That evening, like most other foreigners in Moscow, I was sworn in as a special constable in the militia, which was rapidly formed to maintain order until a new permanent police force could be organized. This work subsequently brought me into close contact with the District Committee of Public Safety, of which I became one of the co-opted members representing the foreign colony, and thus it was I had an opportunity to understand more clearly the fight for control which developed between the Provisional Government and the Soviets during the ensuing eight months.

A Provisional Government was formed in Petrograd, and was mainly composed of progressive members of the Duma, under the leadership of

## MOSCOW, 1911-1933

Prince Lvov, who had, until then, been president of the Union of Zemstvos. On March 13th, two days after the revolution occurred, the Petrograd Soviet of Soldiers' and Workers' Deputies reassembled in Petrograd, and its differences with the Provisional Government quickly developed.

Lenin and his associates hurried back from exile in Switzerland, but he did not endeavour to take upon himself the reins of government immediately, and even as late as May 10th, when the Provisional Government found it necessary to reconstitute itself into a Coalition Provisional Government, the Soviet was content to accept only five portfolios, fearing that it had not sufficient backing in the country to involve itself in greater liabilities.

April 1917 saw the formation of Workers' Committees in most industrial establishments. These committees elected their representatives to local Trade Union Councils, and to the Soviets. They also became the sole medium of all negotiations between employers and the Trade Unions. Their power rapidly increased, and by the end of May the majority of employers found themselves unable to engage or discharge work-people, alter rates of pay, or make any ordinary executive decisions regarding the running of their works, without the agreement of the Workers' Committee being first obtained. An Employers' Federation existed, but it was a singularly bureaucratic organization, which proved of very little use in assisting works administrations to cope with the rapidly growing, and altogether unreasonable, demands which the unions put forward as they felt their power increasing.

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Workers' Arbitration Courts were formed in each district, and although my own experience was that the Jewish lawyers who usually presided were prepared to be reasonable, their hands were tied by the workers' representatives, who invariably came to the Court with instructions from their general meetings of workers not to agree to any compromises whatsoever with the employers. Not a few cases came to my notice where the workers refused to abide by the Court's decisions if its findings were not entirely in their favour. On many occasions, agreements made for a period of two or three months were reached with the union officials and workers' representatives, but were renounced by the same organization two weeks after signature.

During the summer, some hundreds of Russian subjects, who had been ejected from Great Britain for refusal to serve with the Allied armies, arrived in Moscow. Many of these men were able to ensure for themselves good positions in the Trade Union and Soviet organizations by reason of their professed familiarity with the functions of Trade Unions in England. A typical example of such appointments came in my notice when I found it necessary to take up a wages appeal with the local Arbitration Court. An "instructor" was sent down to discuss the matter with me. After a few minutes discussion, I commenced to be dubious about his knowledge of engineering work, and my doubts were entirely removed when a British engineer—a colleague of mine, who had spent much of the war period in London—entered the room and claimed acquaintanceship with the much confused "instructor" on

engineering piece-work rates. Until three months previously, the tools of his trade had been scissors and razors in the hair-dressing department of one of London's leading hotels. This man caused me considerable trouble, because he was nursing a quite unnecessary grievance against Great Britain for having deported him from London, and evidently regarded his dealings with me as a heaven-sent opportunity to give vent to his hatred of the British authorities.

Towards the end of the summer, a period was reached when the Workers' Committees felt themselves sufficiently strong and competent to allow them to subject the managers and foremen of many factories to the gross indignity of being wheeled from the works on wheelbarrows loaded with filth and refuse. Several British and American citizens suffered this fate, but, in almost every case, a week or two of chaos in the works saw the Workers' Committees requesting their return. A case is on record of an American, well known in the Moscow British Colony—the director of a large engineering works employing many thousands of hands—being wheeled out of his factories in a filthy wheelbarrow, and when later asked if he would return, he agreed to do so, provided the wheelbarrow was cleaned and sent for him, and that he was wheeled back accompanied by the works' brass band playing music of his own selection. Unfortunately for the story other unexpected developments prevented this ceremony being performed.

As the strength of the local Soviets grew, Lenin obviously found it increasingly difficult to hold

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back the extreme elements of his followers from making a premature attempt to overthrow the Provisional Government and place all authority in the hands of the Soviets. The rising organized in July 1917 by some of the more ambitious members of the Petrograd Soviet, nearly ended in Lenin's complete defeat. He and many of his colleagues had to go into hiding in the marshes near Sistoresk, but nevertheless the number of voters who cast a card bearing the numeral 4 into the ballot boxes at the Constituent Assembly elections in September and October gave the Bolshevik Party quite a considerable number of seats in the Assembly, which it was arranged should meet in Petrograd early in November. Lenin summoned a second Congress of Soviets a few days prior to the date appointed for the first meeting of the Constituent Assembly, and on the night of November 7th-8th, after two days bargaining with Kerensky, who was then Head of the Provisional Government, the Congress declared that the Government of Russia was from that moment vested in the Council of People's Commissars.

The Smolni Institute—a school for the daughters of the nobility—had been seized, and was now made the temporary headquarters of the new Soviet Government. From here Lenin and his followers directed operations as their *posses* of armed workmen and detachments of revolutionary soldiers quickly overcame the resistance of the remaining supporters of the Provisional Government. With a few exceptions, the resistance offered to the *coup* by the intelligentsia of Petrograd and Moscow was weak and half-hearted.

## MOSCOW, 1911 - 1933

The Provisional Government was thus overthrown. Kerensky and his associates reaped the reward of their weak and vacillating policy. Russia's intelligentsia had proved itself incapable of governing its own country. Kerensky himself succeeded in escaping from the city, but not all his associates were so fortunate.

In Moscow, Lenin's supporters succeeded in establishing themselves only after a week's severe street fighting, during which artillery was used to bombard the central districts of the city, which was held by the defenders of the Provisional Government. The Red Guards, as the Bolsheviks then called their forces, were reinforced by tens of thousands of demoralized and discontented troops, who had deserted from Russia's Western Front. These men had either dismissed or murdered their officers before leaving the front, and, as they approached Moscow, they were given extraordinary promises by the Bolsheviks, on the strength of which their support was gained.

It is to this fact, and to the almost entire absence of patriotism, *esprit de corps* and tradition amongst the old Russian middle classes and the intelligentsia, that the Bolsheviks owe their success at this period. Cruel as it may sound, there were many observers of the revolution who contended that the middle classes in the cities of Russia did not deserve a better fate than that which was ultimately theirs.

It was my lot to be in Moscow throughout these times, and what impressed me most was the callousness of the almost fanatical leaders in the fighting. I saw brutal executions carried out without a sign

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of pity or humane feeling on the part of those who committed these acts. On the other hand, the people of the town were themselves surprisingly calm. Even during the bombardment, railways, postal services, and many other public services functioned as usual, and it was not uncommon to see bread queues standing on one side of a square whilst the other side of the same square was subjected to rifle fire. The theatres functioned as usual, and I first saw Tchekov's *Cherry Orchard* at the Moscow Art Theatre during the days of the bombardment. Incidentally I had to take cover from machine-gun fire on my way home after the performance.

One of my most vivid recollections of the Bolshevik *coup* was the scene in the Red Square in Moscow, when some hundreds of those who had fallen in capturing the city were buried in a common grave alongside the place where Lenin's tomb now daily attracts its hundreds of visitors.

On this bitterly cold November day in 1917, the bodies of the men—who were referred to as the "Sacrifice of the Revolution"—were borne from all parts of the city to the Red Square, accompanied by processions of workmen armed with rifles, and bearing banners with the inscriptions: "Peace, Bread and Freedom"; "Down with the Capitalists of all Countries"; "Away with War"; "Welcome Peace with Germany," etc., etc., and were buried to the accompaniment of fiery revolutionary speeches. Priests who endeavoured to officiate were forcibly prevented from doing so. What an extraordinary change. On this very square,



## MOSCOW, 1911-1933

in 1912, I had seen the Emperor and his Court, supported by 500 priests in gorgeous raiment, giving thanks for Russia's escape from the clutches of Napoleon a hundred years previously. Again, on this square, in March 1917, I had seen the troops of the Moscow garrison marching in to swear allegiance to the Provisional Government; and here, in November of the same year, I beheld the crowd of war-weary, hungry Moscow work-people, fired with revolutionary fervour, surging forward to hear the speeches of their leaders, until their foremost ranks were actually standing amongst, and on, the dead bodies of their comrades in the great open graves. The Red Square in Moscow—the scene of Ivan the Terrible's cruelties, the place where Peter the Great witnessed the execution of the Streltsi—was living up to its reputation on this November morning.

The weeks which followed the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks were full of excitement and anxiety for all. The antagonism existing between the employers and the revolutionary Works Committees increased daily. In many works and factories the committees openly declared their intention of seizing all works property, and it was an open secret that the Soviet was already drafting the decrees for nationalizing industry.

Employers and proprietors of industrial enterprises were naturally making every endeavour to save what they could, and "hang on" in the hope that the Soviet régime would not endure for long.

A most serious blow came early in December 1917, when the Soviet authorities seized the banks.

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All money lying on deposit accounts was "arrested," and private depositors were allowed to withdraw only 150 roubles per week. Even this could not be done without many hours waiting in a queue. Works and factories were not permitted to make withdrawals except for paying wages, and this only on presentation of schedules showing the exact amount earned by all employees. The schedule required countersigning by the Works Committee, the works administration and the local Commissioner of Labour Finance, after which it was presented to the Central Commissioners of Finance, who gave final instructions for the banks to pay out the money. Three or four days were occupied every fortnight in obtaining these signatures, and the delays at the bank were interminable. The reason for these delays was that the complete distrust with which the populace looked upon the Government had resulted in no cash deposits being made, either in the Government Savings Banks, or in the private banks, so that the normal channels for currency circulation were stopped. New paper money was being printed as rapidly as the printing-presses in Petrograd, working day and night, could produce it. Many subterfuges were resorted to by the banks to make good the shortage of paper money. Dividend coupons, cut from State loans, postage stamps and excise stamps were amongst the tokens which were issued in place of silver and copper coinage. The difficulties of paying illiterate work-people with such tokens was enormous. Delays in paying wages were invariably interpreted by the Works Committees as being due to provocation on the

part of the employers, and on this score alone many disturbances occurred.

It was practically impossible to obtain permission to withdraw money for fuel and raw material purchases, and there were many instances of small manufacturers finding themselves arrested and charged by their Works Committees with deliberately endeavouring to wreck the factories' activities by not making suitable arrangements for raw material supplies. When a "shut down" became inevitable, the Works Committees, as a rule, demanded three months wages in advance in lieu of notice. In many districts the Works Committees demanded enormous bonuses, which they asserted were due to them from the excess profits which they assumed and claimed the employers had made during the war period. The final blow came to small concerns in January 1918, when a decree was issued compelling all employers to pay their employees an increase of 26 per cent all round, dating from October 26th, 1917. By the end of January most small works and many large factories had practically ceased production. The cancellation of all war contracts by the Soviet was the last straw. Discipline and order in the works and factories had completely gone. Nominally an eight-hour day had been introduced, but actually machine tools seldom worked more than four or five hours. Whole departments would frequently cease work to join in political discussions and meetings.

The abolition of piece-work became general, and absurdly high day-work rates were substituted. All employees were grouped under categories in their

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Trade Unions. For a man to become a Trade Union member in those days, it was not necessary for him to produce any certificate of his having served his apprenticeship, and thus it was that not infrequently inexperienced peasant youths of eighteen years of age were able to demand a full tradesman's wage.

Works staffs, draughtsmen, foremen, charge-hands, time-keepers, etc., in most cases formed their own unions, and, working in conjunction with the workers' unions, joined in making the private employers' position impossible.

Thus Russia's industries collapsed. Amongst the Allied munition authorities a fear existed that possibly the terms of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty might result in Germany endeavouring to reorganize and utilize certain of Russia's munition-making establishments, and thus it was that, in February 1918, a definite move was made to cripple munition factories.

Wrecking activities of this nature are heart-breaking to an engineer, and, fortunately for me, I was not called upon to take part in this work. But, nevertheless, I did not avoid being accused of doing so. Christmas Day, 1917, will for ever remain in my mind—almost more vividly than the days of the recent Moscow Trial. On Christmas morning no carol singers announced the "Glad Tidings," but a powerful motor-car blew its raucous horn outside the door, and, before I fully realized what was happening, I was arrested and being conveyed to a Revolutionary Court of Summary Jurisdiction to be charged with provocation and sabotage. This Court had nothing of the ceremonial and theatrical setting which sabotage trials now have in Moscow.

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The Court consisted of one Jewish lawyer, a political agitator and two workmen, one of whom I recognized as an illiterate plumber who had previously been in my employ. Prisoner, judges and witnesses sat round a rough table with a torn green-baize cover. The room was full of tobacco smoke. The president, a glass of tea in one hand, and a thick slice of black bread spread with red caviare in the other hand, addressed me with his mouth so full that I could hardly distinguish his words. My case dragged on until the late evening. In these days the punishment for crimes of this nature was immediate execution, and, although I was entirely innocent of the charge against me, nevertheless, my case went badly, and I shall always remember watching the sun setting over the Kremlin Towers and thinking to myself that in all probability it was the last time I should see it. However, late in the evening, I made a sporting bargain with my accusers. The arrangement was that if certain papers should be found in the safes of the Union of Zemstvos, who until that time had controlled all munition production, I should be free. If, on the other hand, the papers were not there, then I had seen the sun for the last time. It took two hours to ascertain whether the papers were actually where I hoped they might be, and that two-hours' wait was infinitely more trying than waiting for Judge Ulrich's verdict in the Moscow Court on April 19th, 1933.

Fate was on my side, and I reached home before midnight, to share with six others a plum-pudding made in a tea-cup. Food and ingredients were so scarce that we could not raise a larger one.

## CHAPTER V

### SIBERIA : MARCH-APRIL, 1918

AS THE WINTER of 1917-1918 dragged on, and the terms of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk became known, it was clear that British engineers engaged on munition work in Russia were fulfilling no useful purpose in the great struggle against Germany and her Allies by remaining at their posts in Russian munition factories. On the other hand, His Majesty's Army Council had given us definite instructions that we were not to leave our positions until we received further orders from the British authorities. On February 24th, 1918, a meeting was held in the Moscow British Club, at which some sixty of us decided to ask the local British authorities to give us instructions to leave our work without further awaiting an answer from London to the representations which we had already made. Our reason for doing this was dictated by the fact that telegraphic communication with Great Britain had virtually broken down. A few days later it became known that it was actually unsafe for men of military age to remain in Moscow without becoming liable to imprisonment ; and consequently, at a further meeting on March 5th, it was decided that we should leave Moscow secretly on the night of March 8th without awaiting final approval from London.

By this time severe fighting was in progress in

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South Finland, and the routes home to Great Britain via Murmansk and Archangel were closed, due to winter conditions, so that the only route by which it was possible for our party to leave Moscow lay across Siberia to the Far East. Although secrecy regarding our departure was almost essential in view of the uncertain attitude of various local and works authorities, we succeeded in arranging with the railway administration in Moscow to put two fourth-class coaches, of the type used for transporting agricultural emigrants, at our disposal. These two coaches were to be attached to a freight train leaving Moscow at 2 a.m. on March 9th. In order to avoid purchasing tickets, the whole party were consigned to Manchuria as freight. The actual way-bill still remains in my possession, and is reproduced in facsimile opposite p. 48. On the night of our departure the thermometer stood at 30 degrees below zero, and a bitter east wind blew the snow in whirls about the sorting yards of the Northern Railway Terminal Station. It seemed as if nature too was adding the final touches to the chilling anxiety and disappointment which filled our hearts as we assembled there shortly before midnight. Most of the party were leaving homes and possessions behind, and, without definite plans or hopes, were setting out for Siberia and the East—refugees.

The coaches for which we had arranged proved to be in a most dilapidated and filthy condition. Many of the windows were broken, so that the cold air penetrated, and the floor was littered deep in filth, old fishbones, sunflower seed-husks and refuse generally. At each end there was a small iron stove

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with a flat top, and these two stoves were to supply our heating and cooking requirements throughout the journey. Two flickering candles threw a dim light on the strange scene as men, women and children endeavoured to arrange themselves and their scanty belongings in the small space available. After two hours we gave up the attempt, and endeavoured to sleep amongst the chaos until day-break, when we awoke to find Moscow was already 100 miles behind us. During one long stoppage at a wayside station we held a "council of war" to review the situation, and organize the routine to which it was essential every member of the party should comply under such conditions.

The first problem was to cleanse the filthy railway coaches, and the method which we adopted of doing this is perhaps worth recording. Removing everything from one end of the coach, we swept and washed down the walls and the three tiers of wooden shelves that served as bunks. The filthy state of these was almost inconceivable. However, everything was precipitated on to the floor, and there sprinkled with water, after which we opened the doors and windows, thus reducing the temperature, so that the whole mass became frozen solid. It was then an easy matter to break up the frozen litter with a crow-bar and throw it from the windows, leaving the floor comparatively clean. A system of guards was established, so that four men were constantly on watch day and night, to resist attempts of local bands of hooligans and others who might wish to invade our coaches, and to keep the fires burning. For a description of the journey



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across Siberia I shall allow myself to quote from a letter which I wrote home on my arrival at San Francisco in the middle of May 1918 :

“ During the first day after leaving Moscow, two of our party succeeded in robbing a freight train of a number of good boards, and with these we soon constructed proper lavatory accommodation, as well as strong barricades with which effectively to block up every door except one of each coach. Fortunately I had anticipated the accommodation being crude, and consequently I had brought with me an axe, hammer, saw, nails, rope, etc., and these items proved of the greatest assistance. On March 10th we reached Vologda, and the chief incident here was our managing to secure several days' supply of firewood. This was a great piece of luck, and came about as a result of our coach being halted on the adjacent track to a covered railway truck, which was being loaded from the off-side by German ex-prisoners. We surreptitiously placed a board across between the two trains, and, whilst the Germans loaded their van from one side, we quietly helped ourselves from the other side, until we got all that we wanted. A locomotive standing near, with a very noisy Westinghouse pump, was our chief ally in this rather risky escapade, for its constant exhaust drowned the sounds of our robbing operations.

“ Throughout the journey I kept a careful record of all firewood and other requisites of which we found it necessary to avail ourselves without previously securing permission or making proper payment ; and on our arrival in Vladivostock this

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list was handed to the British Consul, so that settlement might be made if opportunity ever presents itself.

“ Two days later we reached Vereshagin. Here we found that an anarchist organization had seized control, and a black flag hung over the station. Although this station is an engine stage on the Perm Railway, there was not a single locomotive in the running-shed which was in sufficiently good condition to take our train forward. In consequence of this, our two coaches were detached, and more by chance than otherwise, we were attached to a train of ten or more goods vans, in which a company of three hundred Trans-Baikalian Cossacks were travelling homewards. These men had deserted from the German Front, and, after ridding themselves of their officers, had decided to return to the Trans-Baikalian Provinces. They were a rough-looking crowd, but subsequently proved quite good travelling companions for some three thousand odd miles. Towards evening a train came into the station, going eastwards, and under pressure from our Cossack friends, who, being heavily armed, were able to dictate their requirements to the anarchist committee in charge at the station, the engine was unhooked and attached to our train, so that, after sixteen hours' delay, we once more moved towards Perm, which we reached early the following morning.

“ We halted several hours in Perm, and it was three o'clock in the afternoon before we began the long final ascent into the Ural Mountains. At Kangur our engine gave out entirely, and we spent the

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night in a very beautiful but intensely silent ravine in the hills, where nothing broke the silence except an occasional cough from one of the Cossacks, or the footsteps of the train guard crunching in the frozen snow. Soon after daylight another engine arrived, and we proceeded to Ekaterinburg, which we reached late the following evening. Here we managed to get a fairly decent meal—the first which we had had for several days—but there was a dense crowd about the station, and an atmosphere of apprehension and excitement seemed to fill the place, so that we were glad to leave it before midnight.

“The following afternoon, about three o’clock, we stopped at a small station where a number of commissars, bearing official red arm-badges, boarded our coaches and demanded to search us for firearms. It was obvious from their conversation that they were acting on telegraphic instructions, and moreover that our destination and the numbers of our coaches were already known to the Soviet. This made us extremely anxious, in view of the state in which we knew the country ahead of us to be.

“Late the same night we reached Tiumen, to find a regular battle in progress in the town. Machine guns rattled away incessantly, and yet no one seemed to know exactly what it was all about, or who was attacking the local Soviet. We afterwards ascertained that Czechoslovakian troops were responsible for the fighting which was going on, and that on the following day they had been victorious. The railway station was crowded with

refugees from the shooting, who were anxious to get out of the town. Their plight was pitiful, as the outdoor temperature on this particular night was in the neighbourhood of 80 degrees F. of frost. On March 17th we reached Omsk, and here we found the station, and as far as we could ascertain the town, was under the control of German ex-prisoners of war. We purchased German printed newspapers, which announced that the Kaiser's victorious armies had broken the Allied Front on the Somme, and that Paris must necessarily fall within a few hours. This was the first news of the war which we had had for several weeks, and naturally did not tend to relieve our anxiety. Here also we met a most interesting train. It was a Finnish freight train complete with Finnish engine and train crew, which had come over into Siberia laden with Finnish manufactured products, to exchange these for Siberian food supplies, with which it was then setting out on its return journey to Finland.

“ Shortly after our arrival in Omsk Station, we were able to ascertain that the authorities there had been warned of our coming and were awaiting us with their intention of making us their prisoners. Thanks to the fear which our Cossack co-travellers inspired in the station authorities, our train was sent eastward before the Germans in charge had realized that our coaches were attached to it.

“ After leaving Omsk, we found the country very flat, uninteresting and sparsely populated. The cold was intense, and we had difficulty in keeping the coach at a reasonable temperature. At Barabinsk we were threatened with delay owing to the engine

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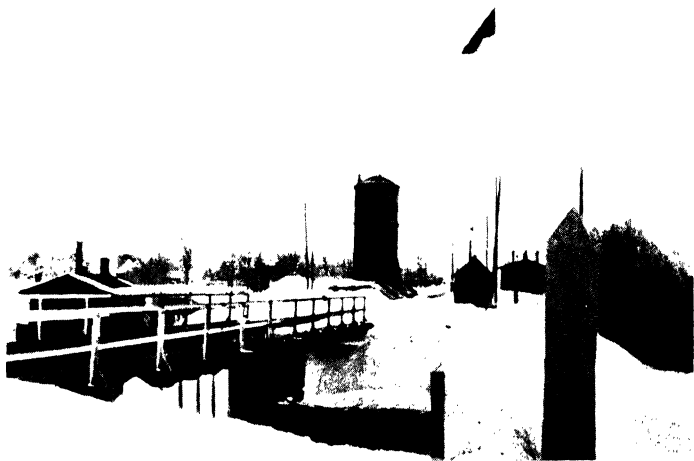
crew being incomplete, and consequently for the following twenty-seven miles, until we reached the next engine stage, I went on to the foot-plate, and did duty as a fireman. The condition of that engine was like everything else we saw on the railway, and typical of the state of affairs things had reached under civil war conditions in Siberia. The engine motion was badly in need of adjustment, and there was hardly a pair of brasses which had not worn far past the ordinary limits. The side rod brasses knocked alarmingly. One injector was entirely out of commission, whilst the other needed several minutes' coaxing to get it to work. Both gauge glasses had burst, and it was necessary to try the test cocks to find the water-level in the boiler. The fire-box door had only one hinge, and needed considerable effort to close it. The air-break had been dismantled, and finally the whistle cord broke as we entered the last station on the engine division.

"The engine driver complained bitterly that things were not half what they were under the Tsar, and showered curses on the revolution and all that it had brought. When I suggested that his engine was rather dilapidated, he replied, 'This one—this is nothing; you should have seen the dirty little samovar [tea-urn] they expected me to drive last trip.'

"After crossing the Irtysh river, the scenery began to be more interesting and the weather improved. The last hundred miles into Krasniyarsk provided most glorious scenery, reminiscent of the Irish lakes. The town of Krasniyarsk was also apparently quite an enterprising little place, with



THE PARTY WITH WHICH THE AUTHOR CROSSED SIBERIA  
Photograph taken at Kuanga Station during the journey



THE RUSSIAN FRONTIER AT BELOOSTROV



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very considerable importance as a headquarters of the navigation on the Obi river. The railway workshops here were fairly extensive, but did not give the appearance of being actively engaged. Early in the morning of March 21st we reached Irkutsk. Here we spent a whole day, and crossed the river on the ice, to visit the town, which had suffered seriously in recent fighting between the Bolsheviks and the defenders of the Provisional Government. We had evidence of cruel excesses painfully brought to our notice.

“Towards evening another train loaded with British refugees arrived, and, as we had already found Lady Muriel Paget and her nursing corps at Irkutsk earlier in the day, there must have been more than a hundred British refugees working their way eastward around the shores of Lake Baikal that night.

“At 3 a.m. the following morning we arrived on the shores of the lake itself, and for the whole of that day we travelled through the most impressive scenery. The views across the forty miles of frozen water into the Stanisloi Mountains, towering twelve thousand feet above the lake shores, were magnificent. A sudden thaw was in rapid progress, and consequently the cataracts that rushed down the mountain-sides gave added beauty to the landscape. One thing here struck me very much, and that was the wonderful silhouettes produced in the early morning—exactly the sort of thing one sees in Japanese art, but which one imagines to be exaggerated.

“Towards evening, we reached the station of



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Misovaya, where the railway leaves the shores of the lake and turns up the Selinga river in its climb across the ranges of hills that divide the basins of the rivers that feed into Lake Baikal from the basin of the River Amur and its tributaries. The scenery continued to be glorious, and we had occasional magnificent views of forests, rivers and mountains.

“Here too the foliage began to change very markedly. In Western Siberia we had seen little but coniferous forests, except along the Baraba Steppes between Tiumen and Omsk. As we passed into the tremendous forests of the Amur basin, however, the size of the trees was greatly increased, and there were far more deciduous trees. I noticed oaks in great number, elm, lime, maple and hornbeam, as well as Scotch pine, Siberian spruce, Siberian fir, yew and the white cedar. For hundreds of miles along the railway the forests had been completely devastated by forest fires, started by sparks from the locomotives in previous summers.

“On the morning of March 25th we reached Chita, but were thankful not to remain there long, and by mid-day we had arrived at Karimskaya, where the line divides—one line going across the Ingoda river and into Manchuria to join the Chinese Eastern Railway, and the other line going through Russian territory all the way to Habarovsk, in Northern Ussuria. Military operations between the army of General Semenoff and the Bolshevik armies had made the Manchurian line impassable, and thus it became necessary for us to change our route and travel by the more northerly line. At

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Karimskaya we waited several hours, and had an opportunity of visiting the neighbouring village to purchase eggs and other food-stuffs. I could not help being struck with the extreme cleanliness of the houses in these villages. The peasants were hospitable and friendly, and in one cottage where we were invited to drink tea we found everything was spotlessly clean, the walls and ceilings, etc., bearing evidence of having been whitewashed regularly. The people here spoke good Russian, and were evidently colonists, although many of the faces one saw on the railway stations were obviously not Russian, and belonged to the Neo-Siberian tribes, particularly Buryats, Tungus, Orochoni, and occasionally one distinguished the features of the Manchu tribe.

“Leaving Karimskaya at noon, we reached Shilka about four in the afternoon. Here we visited one of the little churches that are attached to many of the railway stations in Siberia. The railwayman on the Trans-Siberian Railway in pre-war days certainly could not complain of having his spiritual welfare neglected, for many of the important stations had churches built on the platforms ; and we frequently saw railway-coach churches attached to trains.

“At daybreak on March 26th we arrived at Kuanga, and here we remained till evening. It was a glorious spring day, and we spent several hours up on the hills above the railway, from where we could get fine views over the river into the Manchurian Mountains.

“After our departure from Kuanga we left the

river bank and began a six days' journey through a vast unpopulated forest region. The railway line is located about fifty miles away from the river—i.e. out of reach of artillery fire from the Manchurian frontier. This country was broken and rugged, especially during the long tortuous ascent into the Yablonoi Mountains, where in places one would find oneself looking down on to the track hundreds of feet below at a point traversed an hour or so previously.

“There were no towns, although occasionally we saw gold-mining camps, and at one place we passed one of the world-notorious convict settlements. This settlement appeared deserted, but one could not help feeling that, ill treated as the Siberian convicts were reported to be in days gone by, there are very few towns in England that can boast of more beautiful surroundings.

“Good Friday found us marooned at a wayside loop, on a spur of the Bureyan Mountains. A signalman's hut, two platelayers' cottages and a very primitive saw-mill constituted the entire settlement, which was surrounded by miles upon miles of forests in every direction. There was a small clearing near the line, and after breakfast our whole party turned out and played rounders until lunch-time. Our ex-soldier Cossack friends, and the Russian occupants of the train, stood and watched us with obvious amazement and amusement. I imagine that a game of English rounders had never been played before in those vast forests of the Amur.

“March 30th found us still slowly traversing the spurs of the Bureyan Mountains, although the

## SIBERIA

country was of a more fertile nature. We saw more villages and much land under careful cultivation between here and Habarovsk, which we reached on Easter Sunday. Here we joined the Ussurian Railway, and three days later we found ourselves approaching Vladivostock. We did not know exactly what the state of the town was, but we gathered that there was considerable unrest, and fighting might be expected to commence at any moment. The pessimists of the party feared that after our long journey we would find ourselves little better off than when we left Moscow. Imagine, therefore, our joy when the train came to a standstill in Vladivostock station at 8 o'clock a.m. on April 3rd alongside H.M.S. *Suffolk*, and we found ourselves listening to the strains of 'God Save the King' coming from the cruiser's deck. I shall never forget those first few minutes when the tense strain of weeks of anxiety and fatigue passed away, and we stood on the quay-side in Vladivostock listening to our National Anthem.

"On the afternoon of our arrival in Vladivostock we were entertained on board H.M.S. *Suffolk* by the ship's crew. Foods we had only dreamed about for months were piled high on the tables, and the mess decks were decorated with flags and bunting.

"Three days after our arrival in Vladivostock we witnessed the landing of detachments of Japanese and British troops. This movement was quickly and cleverly carried out with the object of affording protection to foreigners in the town, and guarding the many hundreds of thousands of tons of munitions lying in dumps around the harbour. During

## MOSCOW, 1911-1933

our journey across Siberia we had met several train-loads of Allied munitions which had been secretly removed from these dumps, and were being forwarded across Siberia for delivery to the Central European Powers. Every wagon-load of munitions was labelled 'Swedish Red Cross,' apparently in order to detract attention from its real contents.

"Our stay in the town lasted three weeks, during which time we lived in the railway coaches in which we had crossed Siberia. Time passed quickly, since the port was full of interest at that period, and we were frequently entertained by the officers of the various Allied men-o'-war, who apparently realized the fact that we had ladies in our party who appreciated the comforts of a warship's ward-room after the privations of a journey across Siberia.

"On April 23rd the American Government transport *Sheridan* came into the harbour, and later the same day we embarked on her, bound for San Francisco. I think we all felt relieved to be under a friendly flag once more, but nevertheless, as I crossed the gang plank, I felt very considerable regret at thus leaving Russia, and wondered how long it would be before I again set foot on its territory. As a matter of fact, the answer was not long in coming, because that night I took part in a little expedition which must necessarily still remain unchronicled, but which, nevertheless, provided me with an evening's real adventure and excitement. I made my final departure from Russia's eastern territory, crouching in the bottom of a Chinese sampan, in bright moonlight, endeavouring to

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avoid the vigilant eye of a Russian sentry stationed on the stone jetty above me."

The voyage across the Pacific was far from being a pleasant memory. The American authorities did everything which was possible to accommodate us, and their warrant officers and N.C.O.s chivalrously relinquished their cabins in favour of the ladies of our party, sharing with us the discomforts of hammocks in the hold of the ship, where the atmosphere was rendered heavy and overpowering by a large cargo of cane-sugar. We had some nine different nationalities with us in that hold. Military regulations demanded that lights should be extinguished at 9 p.m., and when the sea was rough the pandemonium which reigned down there baffles description. The final pitch of our anxiety was reached when smallpox broke out amongst us, twelve days before we reached San Francisco. This voyage will for ever remain in my mind as one of the worst experiences I have gone through. The saving feature was the good food and the consideration shown to us by the American officers. We were intensely relieved to reach San Francisco, where we found ourselves the centre of considerable attention. The majority of us then rejoined H.M. forces, and this act on our part was made the excuse for a civic reception, and utilized for recruiting propaganda, since compulsory service had not then been introduced into America's western States.

## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMER, 1918

NOT WITHOUT some reason does California claim to be the Garden of Eden of the modern world. After four years' continuous residence in Moscow, followed by the revolution and the journey across Siberia, this beautiful western coast of America was indeed a paradise. Unfortunately the time was not one for rest and enjoyment, and, after two weeks in those wonderful surroundings, I found myself moving forward across Arizona and the Grand Canyon country to Chicago and New York.

At this period, an intensive recruiting campaign was in progress in the U.S.A., and the British authorities were being permitted to recruit for their own armies and also for the Zionist Battalions for war against the Turks in Palestine. On my arrival in New York, I was called upon to recruit Russian Jews from the city's poorer districts for service in Palestine. The week which I spent employed in this manner, in America's greatest city, was almost an education in itself. The fact that a heat wave was in progress, and that a submarine scare occurred during the week, did not tend to make the experience less memorable. My impressions of New York are distinctly unfavourable. I have a confused memory of hot dusty pavements, squalid tenements, the constant racket of trains on the overhead railway, ailing children, negro

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salvationists, and suspicious women prepared to deal roughly with those whose avowed object it was to entice their men-folk away to war in Europe and Asia Minor. I spent my nights in rooms, provided for me by the recruiting authorities, at an eating house that rejoiced under the name of "Keene's Old English Chop Shop." The rooms were cheap and comfortable—but memories of New York remain as a nightmare in my mind. I saw but little of the fine buildings and other amenities of the city, and it is my sincere hope that some time I may visit New York under more favourable conditions and see something other than its more squalid side. In 1918, New York had a Jewish population of approximately two millions, nevertheless the British recruiting mission's work did not result in adding more than about one hundred men per week to the Zionist Battalions. At the end of a week, I was glad to be sent off with a draft of Jewish recruits to Boston, Portland (Maine), and thence across the Canadian border to Fort Edward Camp at Windsor, Nova Scotia. Here I remained some weeks, teaching Russian recruits to the Jewish Battalions the elements of infantry drill and musketry. On Saturdays I took my charges—now about four hundred men—to the local Town Hall, which was pressed into service as a synagogue. Amongst the recruits there was a Toronto banker—a man of considerable substance, who had joined the army as an example to the younger Zionists of his city—and from him I gathered much of the aims and objects of the Zionists during the time we were awaiting transport to England.



## MOSCOW, 1911 - 1933

On a warm clear evening towards the middle of July 1918, the convoy leader *Kildonan Castle*, leading forty-four vessels heavily laden with American troops, steamed up the Thames, and landed four hundred Zionist recruits and some half dozen gentile N.C.O.s at Tilbury Docks. The following morning I parted with my Zionist charges at Hounslow Barracks, and, after a short investigation by the posting officer in charge there, I was astonished to find myself disbelieved when I recounted the tale of my experiences in Moscow and my journey across Siberia. That night I was confined to Hounslow Barracks until enquiries were made. I shared a tent with twelve other suspects. Unfortunately it was a pouring wet evening, and, as I was the last to be put into the tent, I had to be content with a place under the dripping tent flap, with an Asiatic on each side of me. These two men claimed to be Persians of British nationality, but frankly I was not surprised they were numbered among the suspects. One of them ground his teeth in such an extraordinary manner that sleep was impossible. I lay awake musing that this was indeed a strange home-coming after four years' absence. However, I was able to appreciate the necessity for caution at this critical period of the war, and bore the gallant major at Hounslow no ill will for having meted out to me such a welcome to my "Home Country." In actual fact, I had some most interesting conversations with my co-suspects, many of whom might fittingly be described as "hard-bitten" cases.

After thirty-six hours detention, I was taken

## SUMMER, 1918

under escort to the War Office, where, after a lengthy questioning, I was told that the enquiries which had been made were satisfactory, and that on the following day I was to report to the Examining Board at Stone Court for admission to the Inns of Court O.T.C. I walked out into Whitehall at 6 p.m., and, after making fruitless efforts to get into touch with friends and relations, and having only 2s. 9d. in my pocket, I turned in to the New Zealand Salvation Army Rest Home in Southampton Row. The following evening I reported at Berkhamsted Camp, and commenced my career in the war-time British Army by being soundly rated by an eighteen-year-old corporal (who, I afterwards found, bore the same surname and Christian name as myself) for not carrying my swagger-cane properly. Life at Berkhamsted Camp in August 1918 was to me one long round of petty restrictions and regulations, and I pulled every string I could to get overseas as quickly as possible. Thus it was that early in September I found myself under orders to proceed to Russia with the so-called "Elope" Expeditionary Force.

My efforts to extricate myself from the O.T.C. at Berkhamsted brought me into contact with various political authorities, who were keenly interested in the trend of events in Russia, and at whose request I prepared a short memorandum of the Bolshevik Party, whose dominance in Russia was just then beginning to be appreciated. The following notes have been extracted from this memoranda :

## MOSCOW, 1911-1933

“During the closing years of the nineteenth century, the revolutionary elements of Russia’s intelligentsia had begun to abandon the idea of achieving their object by employing the constitutional methods of Prince Kropotkin, Stepniak and Plekhanov, and hence it was that shortly after Nicholas II ascended the throne in June 1896 the first industrial strike of St. Petersburg work-people was organized. The more extreme elements amongst the revolutionaries who were responsible for organizing this strike met at Minsk in 1898, and formed the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party.

“At a conference held in London in 1903, the Social Democratic Labour Party found themselves unable to agree on the question of organization and methods, and consequently a split occurred, dividing the party into two groups—the ‘Majority’ group, (Bolsheviki) and the ‘Minority’ group (Mensheviki). Even at this early date, Lenin put himself at the head of the Bolsheviki. At a subsequent conference, at Stockholm in 1905, the two groups were temporarily re-united, but following further conferences, held in London in 1907 and 1908, the split between them became final and complete. After the revolution in March 1917, a third group of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party came into existence, under the name ‘The All Russian Unity Organization’ (Oedinstvo), which had for its object the re-uniting of the Bolsheviki and the Mensheviki. Thus it was that at the Constituent Assembly elections in the autumn of 1918, three complete separate groups of candidates

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were nominated, all opposing one another but all under the 'Proletariat of All Countries Unite' banner, of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party.

"In all, twenty political parties and groups put forward official candidates at the Constituent Assembly elections in the late summer of 1917. These were as follows :

Reactionaries		Holy Russia Party (late Russian People's Alliance)	
Liberals	Nationalists	Land-owners' Alliance	
		Progressive Nationalists	
		National Democratic Republicans (late Octobrists)	
	Radicals	' People Freedom ' Party	
		Evolutionary Socialists	
		Republican Democratic Party	
Socialists	National Socialists	Radical Democratic Party	
		All Russian Peasants' Alliance	
		Workers' Socialists	
		Socialist Revolutionary Party	
		Left Socialist Revolutionary Party (Internationalists)	
		Alliance of Maximalist Socialist Revolutionaries	
Socialists	Marxian Socialists	Russian Social Democratic Labour Party	All Russian ' Edinstvo ' Organization
			Mensheviki (National Defence Group)
			Mensheviki (Internationalist Group)
			United Internationalist Group
		Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviki)	
Anarchists	Anarchists	Syndicalists	
		Communistic Anarchists	

"In actual fact the Bolshevik group of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party only took

upon itself the name Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) at the seventh conference of the group, held in February 1918. Under the leadership of Vladimir Ulianov (better known as Lenin), and L. D. Bronstein (better known as Trotski), Kemenev, Pokrovski, Bucharin, Zinoviev, Radek, and others, this party seized the reins of the Government in Petrograd on the very eve of the first meeting of the Constituent Assembly. [The historical details of this seizure of authority, are dealt with in Chapter IV.]

“Lenin and several of his followers were in Switzerland when the March 1918 revolution occurred, and, by arrangement with the German Imperial Government, were permitted to cross Germany in special railway coaches in order to reach Petrograd. As Russia was still at war with Germany, it is not surprising that many look upon this act as direct evidence that the German Government helped the Bolsheviks to bring about their *coup*. If this is so, it was a serious move, because the propaganda going on in Russia to-day is likely to be more dangerous and lasting in its effects than the most dreadful munitions which German militarism has yet invented. Those who go so far as to claim that Bolshevism has been devised by Germany to cripple the armies of Russia, are, of course, quite mistaken, and show a painful lack of knowledge of the history of Socialism during recent years. The policy being followed by Lenin and his friends is that of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.

“This policy has been clearly defined on posters and handbills which were displayed in the streets

of Moscow early in 1918. One poster, which was given wide publicity, outlined the programme of the Communist Party as follows :

1. The approaching International Socialist Revolution in all countries demands the establishment of dictatorship of a *proletariat* in Russia. The elected Constituent Assembly and all bourgeois parliaments must be regarded as institutions acting against the will of the people, and must be abolished, leaving all law-making and governing in the hands of the Council of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies (Soviet).

2. Having concluded a degrading and unsatisfactory peace with Germany, dictated by German Imperialism, the Soviet Republic must set to work to revive the military spirit of the country, using the militia and armed workers as a basis, in order to be prepared to assist in the international movements of Socialists to establish an era of Socialism in all countries.

3. The Soviet Republic must be without police or regular army, and must be governed by elected parliament. The election of members must be for two years, members retiring by rotation, thus avoiding a simultaneous general election. A proportional representation ballot system must be adopted. Members must be paid, but can be dismissed at any moment should it be proved that a majority of their supporters are against them. No presidents of the Republic are to be elected. A very complete system of local self-government and of local Soviets must be set up.

4. The right of self-determination for the small nations must be formally established.

5. A compulsory education system must be established, but powers must be given to citizens to elect teachers for their local schools by ballot.

6. The Church must be disestablished.

7. The police and regular army must be replaced by a workmen's militia, to be paid union rates of wages whilst serving.

8. Nationalization of all banks and financial syndicates must be carried out immediately.

9. All indirect taxation must be abolished.

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10. High income tax and heavy death duties must be levied to meet expenditure.

11. Workmen's control of finance must be established.

12. State and public control of all manufacturing and distribution of raw materials must be established.

13. General compulsory labour must be introduced.

14. Immediate steps must be taken to confiscate the land of the large land-owners, church-lands, lands belonging to monasteries and to members of the late Imperial family. All lands must become the property of the State.

15. Distribution and division of the land for the use of the peasants must be placed in the hands of the local Soviets.

16. Collective tilling of the land on large estates must be encouraged where possible.

17. An eight-hour working day must be universally introduced, with a reduction to six and to four hours in trades dangerous to the health of the workers. The eight hours must include one hour for partaking of food. All night-workers must work only four hours per day.

18. Workmen's State Insurance must be continued. (Note—This was introduced in 1912-1913 by the Imperial Government.)

19. An elected organization of factory inspection and Industrial Arbitration Courts must be established.

20. Legislation must be introduced to improve the sanitary and living conditions for the workers.

21. A complete system of State Labour Exchanges must be set up.

“ Other leaflets issued were most outspoken in their condemnation of ‘ Imperialist ’ England and ‘ Capitalist ’ America. The workers were invited to ‘ organize ’ in order to guard against the attacks from foreign imperialism which must be expected. The workers of the world were invoked to ‘ make use of the lamp lit in Russia to carry the social revolution into every country in the world. ’ ”

## SUMMER, 1918

These appeals, it should be noted, were issued in the first days of 1918, before the Allied intervention in Russia was considered.

In the summer of 1918, the Allies realized that the terms of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk left it possible for Germany to acquire the huge stocks of munitions and supplies lying at Vladivostock, Archangel and Murmansk ; and for this reason felt themselves justified in sending expeditionary forces to prevent such a possibility becoming a fact. What we had seen as we crossed Siberia, where we met train-loads of munitions proceeding westwards under the label of the " Swedish Red Cross," was sufficient cause to justify the occupation of the areas where those great " dumps " existed. It was also important to prevent Germany establishing submarine bases on the shores of the Kola Peninsula.

On September 18th, I sailed from Dundee, and, after a voyage which may be described as anything but a pleasant cruise, the ex-German liner, on which we were, dropped her anchor in the Northern Dvina, opposite Archangel, on the evening of September 30th, 1918. Amongst those on board I had found more than thirty members of the old British Colony in Moscow—all going out as sergeant-interpreters to the expedition. I had been detailed to the Military Intelligence Service, but, two days before we entered the White Sea, I had been lying, reading, in a life-boat on the boat deck—a strictly forbidden retreat, but, under the crowded conditions of that transport, one to which I often retired—when a colonel of Royal Engineers assembled his brother officers of the Railway Operating Unit



## MOSCOW, 1911 - 1933

near my retreat, and told them that the War Office had no information whatsoever about the railway at Archangel, and had been unable to procure him the services of an engineer who knew the district or knew Russian. When he had finished his pow-wow I emerged from my place of hiding, where I had been an unintentional eavesdropper, and, after complying with the prescribed procedure for an N.C.O. who wishes to speak with a senior officer, I told him that I knew Archangel and Bakaritsa quite well. I had been at Archangel on transport work when the new railway was completed and put into service in 1916, and, moreover, I knew Russian and had spent many years in Russian works. After several caustic comments on the efficiency of certain departments in Whitehall, this colonel of Engineers made immediate application for my transfer to the Railway Operating Division.

## CHAPTER VII

### ARCHANGEL, 1918-1919

A COLD autumn wind whipped the waters of the Northern Dvina into "little white horses" as our heavily laden landing-boat reached the jetty at Archangel, and our party of thirty-four N.C.O.s proceeded ashore to report to General Headquarters for duty as interpreters. A tall young officer, who had been sent down by the headquarters staff to meet the party, awaited us on the jetty, and, as I saw him in the distance, something of his movements and bearing appeared familiar. My astonishment and pleasure may be imagined, better than described, when I found that the officer who had been sent to hand us our instructions was no other than my friend and colleague Captain C. S. Richards. Captain Richards had come to Archangel as an officer-interpreter with the first British detachment, and, after taking part in a brilliantly planned and successful action on the Murman railway, had been posted to the headquarters staff at Archangel.

On the evening of the day on which I landed at Archangel, the talk which I had with the colonel of Engineers on board the transport resulted in my being detailed as a sergeant-interpreter to the Railway Operating Division, and consequently I proceeded, early the following day, to the little

railway settlement of Isaka-Gorka. This little place, which I was destined to make my home for thirteen months, was a pleasantly situated old village on the high bank of one of the many mouths of the Northern Dvina. In 1915 it had been transformed into a railway depot, with running sheds and repair workshops. These running sheds and workshops employed about eight hundred men, but the state of the whole place on our arrival was pitiable to behold. There was no semblance of discipline in the whole organization ; and, although the men presented themselves for work daily, there was practically no work of any kind being done. The men very reasonably claimed that they could not work because the food shortage was so acute that they were unable to get adequate nourishment. Our commanding officer instructed me to investigate this claim, and hence, from the outset, I found myself in close contact with the workers and peasants of the district. The tales which they recounted of their experiences under the short Bolshevik régime during the spring of 1918 were calculated to elicit sympathetic treatment in the matter of rationing, and to provide propaganda material for the interventionists. Personally, I was disinclined to believe a great many of the exaggerated statements which came to my notice.

Whilst making my investigations, I became associated with a fitter in the repair workshops, named Lomonosov, whom I had observed was one of the few men really doing a day's work at his bench each day. It transpired that he was the Chairman of the Local Workers' Committee, and was an ardent

member of the Menshevik section of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party. On several occasions I accompanied him to the neighbouring villages, and in his own quarters I met many of his fellow workers. From these people I was able to get a picture of conditions in the district, both before and after the revolution, which helped me greatly in my subsequent work at Isaka-Gorka, but on the other hand not unnaturally brought me into some disrepute with my superiors as being Russo-phile. Under the circumstances I felt it my duty to allow this impression to remain, because, unfortunately, many of our Allied officers in the district had evidently been accustomed to dealing with Asiatic and dark races, and were inclined to treat our Russian Allies in the manner which they had previously adopted towards less-enlightened peoples.

As a result of the report which I assisted to make at this time, a scheme of rationing the civil population and all industrial workers was put into operation. The scheme provided a limited ration for all, and special additional rations for workers. Those who particularly distinguished themselves received a further premium ration.

It became my duty to ration about two thousand seven hundred civilians, and the work provided me with some extraordinary insights into the limits to which semi-starving people will go in order to procure food. Constant vigilance was necessary to ensure that shortages did not occur in our food stocks, but, despite my efforts, I afterwards learned that irregularities did take place. There were many

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educated Russian and Polish women refugees in the district, whose outlook on moral conduct had apparently been sufficiently badly shaken during the revolution to allow them to contract temporary alliances with the personnel of our Allied armies in order to secure the benefit of "premium" ration cards and chits to purchase goods at the N.A.C.B. canteens. This, and what was known as "skolker-ing," i.e. reselling N.A.C.B. food-stuffs, tobacco and spirits, at fabulous profits to the local inhabitants, were the chief irregularities the suppression of which made considerable demands on my time and patience, particularly during the period of our sojourn at Isaka-Gorka when I was left in command of the railway personnel.

The railway sector of the Archangel front was not distinguished by any great military exploits. A front line had been formed by cutting away the forest in order to gain a clear field of fire, and the building of suitable block-houses and gun sidings hidden in patches of forest. Our chief defence was the natural tundra, which during the greater part of the year is impassable to either man or beast. The dangers of endeavouring to cross these marshes were forcibly and tragically demonstrated to me on the first occasion that I visited the front. A pony, on which a Cossack officer was riding, became frightened by a bomb dropped from an aeroplane, and, leaving the corduroy road, disappeared completely out of sight, *with its rider, in the almost unfathomable bog.*

It was my duty to visit the front at regular intervals, but I seldom saw great activity, although raids were made from time to time. Long periods

occurred when actual fighting did not take place, and not infrequently isolated cases of fraternization were reported. Souvenir hunting was apparently the chief occupation of many of the troops of at least one of our Allies with whom I came into contact, and there is little doubt that many of the enemies' gas-masks and "tin hats" which ultimately made the journey home across the Atlantic were secured at the cost of a few thousand cigarettes and other N.A.C.B. supplies.

My responsibilities included the maintenance of an armoured train. From time to time this train provided me a little excitement and diversion, but I think my most exciting moment was when our own six-inch naval-gun crew set their elevation too low, and carried the cab roof off the locomotive. I was standing alongside, talking to the driver, when this alarming accident occurred. The safety-valve lever was also carried away, resulting in a cloud of steam and a noise which must have been seen and heard by our enemies for many miles. On another occasion, during the Bolshevik retreat, fear was entertained that the enemy's armoured train was returning, and, in order to stop this, a locomotive was released without its crew, in the hope that the ensuing collision would effectively prevent their return. The collision did not, however, do the damage expected, because our locomotive "jumped the metals" and turned over on its side just before it reached the enemy's train. Subsequently I had the task of picking this locomotive up again, and repairing it.

From a military point of view our operations on

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the railway front could hardly be regarded as serious warfare, and from the time it was learned that the Armistice had been signed in France the majority of those concerned were perplexed to understand why fighting in North Russia should still continue.

There was, of course, no questioning the necessity of our having sent troops to Archangel and Murmansk to occupy those areas after the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, and, whilst we were ourselves still engaged in warfare with the Central Powers, it was obviously imperative that we should prevent Germany availing herself of the large quantities of military supplies which lay at these ports, and also to prevent Germany using the open ports on the coast of the Kola Peninsula as submarine bases. However, when the Armistice had been signed, and the signature of a peace treaty appeared certain, it was difficult to understand why Great Britain should have been taking part in Russia's civil war. The explanation is, of course, that in these northern districts we were inadvertently drawn into the civil war in taking the steps which we did to safeguard ourselves against Germany, and, once having been drawn in, it was thought that we could not gracefully retire leaving the White Armies defenceless and at the mercy of the Red Guards of the Soviets.

Early in 1919 an intensely cold blizzard swept across the White Sea, and caused much anxiety in the minds of the Allied command as to the safety of several small groups of N.C.O.s and men who were crossing on the ice from the Kola Peninsula to Archangel. Commander Sir Ernest Shackleton was personally in charge of maintaining a service across

the White Sea, which service constituted our only link with the outside world, and on which we relied for mails and for medical supplies and lime-juice. Our need for lime-juice had become acute, due to the rapidity with which scurvy was spreading amongst our troops, and amongst the civil population.

Late one evening I received instructions to proceed through the forest to the west of Oborser-skaia to meet a detachment who were arriving from the Kola Peninsula. I found it composed of six youths under the command of an acting lance-corporal, himself only twenty years of age. None of the men had any previous arctic experience. Three of them had never before slept in the open. They had arrived at Murmansk, been given five days' rations and instructed to proceed to Archangel. With grit and a sense of duty, which I admired immensely, they carried out their instructions. Acting Lance-corporal Simms had not suffered much from his experiences but the men under his command were badly frost-bitten. I often wonder how many thousands of similar incidents of bravery and hardship passed unnoticed and unrewarded during the eventful years of the Great War. When I brought this particular incident to the notice of Shackleton, he expressed himself in no uncertain terms regarding the action of the Allied authorities on the other side of the White Sea in sending inexperienced men on such a journey.

During February 1919, the cold was intense but, once the difficulties with scurvy had been overcome by making the daily issue of lime-juice a compulsory



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ration, the health of the men was good. The air was wonderfully clear, and almost every night we witnessed the most magnificent displays of the aurora borealis. When the sun began to appear just above the horizon, at mid-day, we frequently observed a bright pillar of light directly above it and also many interesting rainbow-like effects apparently due to the extreme cold.

On January 23rd, 1919, I was notified that I had been granted a commission. Our commanding officer, Major Heatherington, having served since 1914, was gazetted home for demobilization and on his departure I took command of the unit in which I had served as an N.C.O. and of all mechanical engineering work on the railway.

As the summer wore on the days grew longer, until, in June, the sun disappeared below the horizon for only a few moments at midnight. I found that, like the animals, I did not need much sleep during the long days of the arctic summer. For weeks I did not retire to rest before one or two in the morning, and arose, four hours later, feeling perfectly fresh and fit to inspect my men before they proceeded to work. In consequence of this, I had much time on my hands, and fell into the practice of taking long walks in the forests. Occasionally my walks would take me to villages seven or eight miles away, and thus it was that by degrees I made acquaintances with several peasant families living in these secluded districts. On St. Peter's Day (June 29th) I took advantage of an invitation to a village festival in the village of Lubova. This is one of a chain of prosperous villages lying along the

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high bank of the Northern Dvina. In accordance with old-established custom, the main feature of the evening was an enormous meal served in the five-roomed dwelling of the village "Starost" or senior elder. Although the Starost's wife and daughter sat at table with us, they did not eat, but busied themselves ministering to the wants of their men-folk. Soup and a huge slice of cabbage pie followed the usual preliminary *sakuska* of raw herring and vodka. By the time I had finished the cabbage pie, I felt I had eaten more than enough, but nothing would appease my hosts except that I should keep the remainder of the party company, and consume a large portion of fish-cake, followed by roast goose, and a very stodgy section of fruit-tart.

The Starost was a fine old peasant, who was exceedingly proud of the fact that, forty years previously, he had made the journey to Moscow by road. He had frequently seen steam railway trains at Isaka-Gorka, but said he had never risked his life in a conveyance of this sort. He discussed his crops, and engaged in a long argument with a peasant from a neighbouring village on the relative productivity of land on the edge of the tundra, and that nearer the cliffs, as he called the abrupt drop from the plateau to the delta of the river. In this district the tundra cannot be cultivated, and hence the peasants are only able to till a narrow strip of land lying between the tundra and the cliff.

When we finished our meal, the whole company arose and, turning towards the ikon with its little

lamp lit before it, devoutly crossed themselves. This done, they all proceeded to kiss the hand of the hostess, and shake hands generally all round. We then proceeded out of doors to a shady knoll overlooking the river, where the older people sat and drank tea, watching a number of younger members of the community dance Russian dances to the music of a balalaika. Other young people took themselves to the river, from whence the music of other balalaikas and old Russian songs could be heard ascending from the boats as they were paddled aimlessly up stream. The scene was an idyll of happy village life. The only incongruous element appeared to be my khaki uniform, and my Sam Browne belt, reminding everyone that sterner scenes were being enacted not far distant.

Judging by the meal which had been served, the general appearance of this old peasant's house, and the demeanour of his family, it appeared that the inhabitants of these remote northern villages had not suffered much during the war and the revolution. Clearly they were looking forward to the establishment of a strong constitutional Government, which would enable them to find a market for their salable products, and provide them with a stabilized currency. The old man was very much worried regarding the deterioration in the value of the old paper currency of the Tsarist and Provisional Governments, of which apparently he was the possessor of a considerable amount.

Towards midnight I took my leave and set out along the "cliffs" to Isaka-Gorka. An elderly

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peasant, who had fish-nets and traps to attend to up the river, and a young woman of about thirty—a typical peasant, who had very obviously had some experience of town life—elected to accompany me. The young woman, who proved to be the village schoolmistress, was going for a summer excursion to the Solovetz Monastery, on an island in the White Sea. Somewhat naturally our conversation turned to this famous old monastery. My trapper companion had driven there across the ice in winter many times, and been there by steamer in the summer. Often, when I hear of the horrors now being enacted at Solovetz by the agents of the O.G.P.U., who use it as a political prison, I think of that old peasant, sitting on a stile, with his face gleaming as he recounted the beauty of the service chanted by the monks in that island monastery. I wonder what the régime of the O.G.P.U. has brought to the inhabitants of that happy community in a remote village of the far north.

From this trapper I learned that there were still families in this district bearing English names and having English blood in their veins. Some days later I accompanied him to the village of Zaostrovski, lying on the river delta some twelve miles from Archangel. Here he showed me numbers of tombs of British families who had lived in these parts before the time of Peter I, and when Archangel had been Russia's first port.

He told me his own antecedents had come from the Vologda district some generations ago, and that in these northern districts serfdom had not existed, and thus it was that his village lived in

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comparative prosperity. According to him the young men of the community frequently found work in the saw-mills at Archangel and Economnia, and on the railway, and this brought money back to the village. With regard to food, he told me the potato crop never failed ; the cereal crops were always reliable despite the very short summer ; and, until then, the European war had not caused them to feel any shortage of milk, fats and meat, as they had their own herds. Moreover the forests and the river provided them with game and fish. The tundra gave them boundless quantities of bilberries, cranberries, cloudbberries, raspberries and other fruits. Edible toadstools and fungi, which all Russians relish, grew in abundance. As if to illustrate his words, he took me to examine his fish-traps in the river. As a result of my acquaintanceship with him, I seldom went without salmon, bream, blackcock or capercaillie for dinner in my train, in return for which he received my daily issue of bully beef and M. & V. rations.

In the summer of 1919 the British Government sent reinforcements to North Russia until, as statistics show, we had over twenty-eight thousand British troops in that area.

General Grogan and General Sadler Jackson landed with many thousand reinforcements during the early summer, and their arrival was greeted with the wildest rejoicings on the part of the Russians. On the day of General Grogan's arrival a Holy Procession was organized in Archangel, in which British troops took part. The procession was headed by the local clergy and the heads of the

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local Provisional Government. The Archangel newspaper published a special edition, with the headlines "Friends in need are friends indeed." General Grogan made a strong speech assuring the White Russians of Great Britain's support. I always think that this action was due to a bad misunderstanding somewhere, because within a short time it became apparent that the British Government had sent reinforcements to Archangel to facilitate evacuation, and not primarily as an interventionist army to support the White Russians in their fight with the Red Guards.

After having had their hopes built up in this manner, it is not therefore surprising that the announcement that the Allied armies would leave Archangel in September, which was made late in July, was received with blank astonishment and incredulity by the White defenders of the northern coast of Russia. I was summoned to act as one of the interpreters when the news of this decision was actually communicated to the Russians and I will long remember the sequence of emotions—incredulity, surprise, disappointment, fear and resentment—which manifested themselves as the real intention of the Allied Governments became properly realized.

Evacuation having been decided upon by the Allied command, many actions were taken by the White Russian authorities which can only be ascribed to their fear of the consequences of our leaving. As an illustration I might recount an incident in which I was involved. Among my railway-operating troops, I had eighty-six men who had

been captured from the Red Armies and who had ultimately joined what was known as the Slavo-British Legion. These men had done well and had stood by me during the troublesome and anxious days of the mutiny in July 1918. I owed them much—possibly my life—and hence, when evacuation was decided upon, I acted upon instructions from General Headquarters and gave them their choice of (1) Evacuation with the Allies ; (2) Immediate demobilization in Archangel ; and (3) Repatriation across the front to Soviet Russia. Seventeen men chose repatriation, and, believing it was a genuine offer, I sent the men down to Archangel where I understood a draft was being made up for repatriation. As we had repatriated many civilians during the summer across the front, this did not seem an unnatural action. My surprise may be imagined, when, a week later, I heard by chance that my seventeen men were to be executed next morning as being traitors. I rushed off to Archangel and put the case before the Commander-in-Chief himself, and, with his characteristic fairness, he soon put a stop to this act, which already had the approval of the Russian General Millar.

Late in September the evacuation of British troops from Archangel was completed. It was a painful business for those of us who, due to our knowledge of the language, had to conduct negotiations with those whom we were leaving behind, and who already knew it was only a matter of weeks before the Red Armies of the Soviet would be triumphant, and that they would necessarily suffer



A STREET IN THE TOWNSHIP AT CHORNOE OZERO  
showing the varied architecture of the buildings

The bungalow on the right was allocated to the author and his family





for the part they had played in supporting our expedition.

There was no resistance to our evacuation, and as far as the railway front was concerned, not a single shot was fired on either side. I was personally the last British officer to leave the railway, being driven down from Isaka-Gorka on my Drury truck, just in time to embark on the last steamer to leave Bakaritsa—S.S. *Menelaus*. Before leaving, I procured from the Russians official receipts in duplicate for every piece of British Government property left behind.

Some months later I read a semi-official account of the difficulties under which the evacuation had been carried out, and the dangers involved whilst withdrawing troops from the railway front. I thought of the cup of coffee I had drunk early in the morning of September 27th, 1919, with the Russian who had taken over my train, and the workshops at Isaka-Gorka, and I remembered the final leave-taking during which forced cheerfulness had served to cloak our real feelings. Although I cannot say I ever found much to admire amongst the majority of those responsible for leading the Russian so called "White Armies" at Archangel, I was profoundly sorry for our Allies thus left to their own resources against overwhelming odds. The Allied command had offered to evacuate the White defenders of Archangel to the Kola Peninsula, together with all who wished to go with them, but, acting on Admiral Kolchak's instructions, General Millar and the local government had decided to make an attempt to defend the town. The fact that

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he failed to do so surprised no one who knew anything of the position, as we, who were in touch with the work-people and peasants of the surrounding districts immediately before the Allied evacuation, saw it.

## CHAPTER VIII

### U.S.S.R. IN 1924—SHATURA

IN 1924 the majority of those who travelled to Moscow from Western Europe chose a route through Riga, which brought them over the Russian frontier at the little frontier town of Sabesh. A more unworthy and depressing frontier establishment than that which then existed at this point could hardly be imagined. The authorities in Moscow then made no attempt whatsoever to impress foreigners visiting their country, and many unfavourable comments have doubtless had their origin in the filthy and overcrowded little room at Sabesh which rejoiced under the name of a restaurant ; and where a meal was served the after-effects of which quite commonly lasted for some days.

The bad impression which Sabesh made upon me was increased as the train approached the Windau Station in Moscow, through a veritable "cemetery" of derelict locomotives and decrepit rolling-stock. On arrival at the station, I had some difficulty in finding transport, but ultimately engaged an extraordinarily antiquated automobile, in which I drove to the Savoy Hotel. For some reason I do not yet understand, the chauffeur stopped before we reached the hotel and demanded a fare which would have been approximately £4,000,000 at par

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exchange rate. I gave him some four shillings' worth of small change in various European currencies, and he seemed perfectly content.

In those days the constructional activities which followed the introduction of the New Economic Policy had not yet extended to the outlying districts of Moscow, and consequently the drive along the Sretinka, with its boarded-up and broken shop windows, did nothing to counteract the unfortunate impression which was rapidly taking form in my mind. At the hotel I was given a small bedroom which had just been vacated, and which still bore traces of its previous occupant's habits. Some crumbs of a meal were on the table, from which a well-fed rat ran to its hole when the reception porter opened the door. It was about 10.30 a.m., but when I asked for clean linen and some sort of a meal, the porter apologized profusely, and told me that, in view of the fact that Lenin was being laid to rest in his temporary mausoleum in the Red Square that day, it was a day of rest and general mourning, and no restaurant or other services would be available before six in the evening. I went out and wandered amongst the dispersing funeral crowds, until the intensely cold wind drove me back into the hotel, where I found the heating also was cut off until 6 p.m. So this was Moscow in 1924—the new capital of the U.S.S.R. My impressions were growing worse every hour.

The following day, however, I reported at the headquarters of the organization which was responsible for building the large new peat fuel power station at Shatura. This was to be the firstfruit

of Lenin's electrification scheme, and would ultimately be capable of supplying some hundred and eighty thousand kilowatts to Moscow. Here I was received by Mr. Winter, at whose invitation I had come to Moscow, and with whom I proceeded that night to Chornoe Ozero, where the actual constructional work was in progress.

The keenness and efficiency which manifested itself everywhere at Chornoe Ozero was sufficient to remove completely the impression that Sabesh and the Savoy Hotel had made on me on my arrival, and inspire in me that enthusiasm which has led me to do my utmost to help and support the constructional authorities in the U.S.S.R. over a period of nine years. The optimistic view which I have always maintained as to the ultimate outcome of events in the U.S.S.R. developed in my mind after some months' close association with Mr. Winter and his colleagues at Chornoe Ozero, and was first seriously shaken by the frank admissions of failure which the attitude of the O.G.P.U. investigator Belogorski and the Public Prosecutor of the R.S.F.S.R., Vishinski, made apparent during the examination which preceded the "Moscow Trial" in March and April 1933. It is an irony of fate, perhaps, that these two henchmen of Stalin's oligarchy should have been responsible for shaking the optimism and alienating the sympathies of one of the sincerest friends the Soviet authorities have had amongst the foreigners living in the U.S.S.R.

The fourteen months which I lived, with my family, at Chornoe Ozero from September 1924 until November 1925 will for ever remain in my mind as

a happy period. I enjoyed the satisfaction which came of watching a great work, with which I was closely associated, growing and reaching maturity.

In the early summer of 1925 the constructional work called for the services of some four thousand workers. The engineering staff was relatively small, and most of us were called upon to work exceedingly long hours. For a period of some months I worked an average of seventeen hours a day (including Sundays), but the atmosphere of keenness and enthusiasm which surrounded the place made the working of long hours a pleasure.

On several occasions Trotski himself, who was then in charge of all electrification work in the country, visited the power station, and I was deputed to conduct him round portions of the plant. He was surprisingly keen to understand many intricate details which I should have imagined a man in his position would have considered beyond his sphere. I commented on this, and he told me that as a young man he had studied engineering for two years.

The constructional work at Shatura called for the building of a complete small town, including the provision of its water and electric light supply, drainage, and other services. At this time supplies of building materials of any kind were difficult to obtain, and hence the organization established for itself three saw-mills, a sash and door factory, a number of brick-works, and an engineering workshop, employing some six hundred hands, and capable of making its own small castings.

The site which had been chosen for the power

station lay between three lakes. Mr. Winter had done his utmost to preserve the natural beauties of the place in laying out the station and the township, which was designed to house the two thousand workers the station itself, and the surrounding peat workings, would ultimately employ.

The houses in the township were built of logs, but care was taken that character was given to the streets by varying the architectural features of the buildings. Mr. Krassin visited the settlement on several occasions, and it was at his suggestion that adjacent houses were painted different colours to avoid the streets losing their individuality and character.

Amongst the public buildings which had to be provided were an elementary school, a secondary school, guest-houses, public baths, a theatre, a workers' club, two co-operative stores and a well-equipped hospital. In every detail Mr. Winter's hand could be seen. He was out at 6.30 every morning, and he expected his staff to be at their work at that early hour. He seldom dismissed us before late in the evening. No detail escaped his attention, and he ensured that everyone who worked with him never had an idle moment.

The work was, however, not without its troubles. Although in those days the local Communist Party organizations and "cells" had not assumed the authority which they now possess on construction camps of this sort, there were, nevertheless, occasional difficulties with the labour employed. This was particularly the case when the work was nearing completion and it became necessary to reduce



the number of workers. The chiefs of the various sections were called upon to prepare lists of those whom they proposed to dismiss, and it is perhaps not surprising that these lists contained the names of many Communists. The immediate result was that the local party organization made a protest, and prepared their own list of workers for dismissal in which they deliberately included the names of many key workmen—men whose politics they knew were anti-Communist. The dispute was referred to Moscow, and Trotski sent down an “instructor” to restore peaceful relations. This man had obviously had instructions to support Mr. Winter and his staff, and when the spokesmen of the disgruntled workers made reference to Mr. Winter’s autocratic methods the instructor interrupted him, telling him Mr. Winter had been appointed by the People’s Government to control the construction of the power house, and that any agitation against his orders was tantamount to “action against the will of the people,” and would have to be punished accordingly. This failed to satisfy the spokesman ; but Mr. Winter suddenly flashed the question at him : “How many bricks are there on this job ? ” A short argument followed, which led to a conclusion being reached that less than 140,000,000 bricks had been used in building the power station. With this fact established, our respected chief brought the discussion to an end by saying, “So, Comrade Spokesman, your share of this station as a citizen of the U.S.S.R. is less than one brick. If you feel you are strongly dissatisfied with the way things are done here, take your — brick and go into the

forest anywhere you like, and do what you like with it, but leave this place and its management alone.”

Further argument was impossible, and the instructor, taking this challenge as his text, read a little homily on the uselessness of each man endeavouring to control his own brick, and the absolute necessity of working strictly in accordance with the plans of the State, as represented by its properly appointed representative, Mr. Winter.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE CAUCASUS, MAY 1926

SHTEROVKA POWER STATION was the first large electric power station erected in the Donetz coal district under the G.O.E.L.R.O. plan. A start was made on this work in the spring of 1924, and it is gratifying to relate that the completed power station which it became my duty, on behalf of the various contractors involved, to put into operation in the autumn of 1926 was equipped throughout with British boilers, generating plant, switch gear and transformers. In the early summer of 1926 my wife accompanied me to Shterovka. The power station authorities, with the kind consideration which they displayed throughout, sent a touring car to meet us at Nikeetovka, whence we made the journey across the steppes to the village of Nova-Pavlovka—a distance of eighty miles. For the greater part of the way there were no roads, and we drove straight across the open steppes, following well-beaten tracks.

Nova-Pavlovka itself was a large village lying, like most of the villages in this district, in one of the steep-sided valleys which intersect the steppes. The uplands of steppes are virtually treeless, but these deep valleys abound with trees and vegetation.

Prior to our arrival considerable rain had fallen, and the roads and tracks were rivers of mud, which

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made progress both by motor vehicles and on foot very difficult. House-builders in the villages, however, apparently welcomed the mud, for we found them collecting it from the roads and utilizing it for building their mud and lath houses, and for making large sun-baked bricks. We were interested to notice that they used straw in making their bricks, and they told us that, like the Israelites of old, they could not make bricks without straw. When mud became scarce we found these villagers carrying water to the roads in ox-carts, and, after throwing it on the surface, they drove teams of oxen through it, thus trampling the straw into the mud. The effect of this was to make the road almost impassable for our car and other traffic, but this fact seemed not to bother them at all. They waved to us, indicating we could drive over an adjoining wheatfield, in which the crop was ripening, and this we did.

The house in which we stayed at Nova-Pavlovka had been occupied by the coachmen of one of the pre-war landed proprietors. It too was of mud and lath construction and had mud floors, but it was clean and comfortable, although of course it had none of the conveniences to which a town dweller is accustomed.

The month which we spent in Nova-Pavlovka allowed us to see much of the extraordinarily primitive life of the people of the steppes. In pre-revolutionary days the grain-producing area for some miles around this village had been farmed by four or five large landed proprietors, three of whom had their country residences actually in the village. These residences were now all occupied by the engineering

and technical staffs of the power station construction authorities. Many of the peasants in the village had been labourers on the big estates, although there were several more prosperous peasant families who had farmed their own lands. Windmills were still in operation where the majority of the peasants had their grain ground for their own use, paying the miller for his services in kind.

The three thousand workers who were at this time engaged on the construction of the new power station had been quartered in the village and in temporary wooden huts near their work, and thus the locality was rapidly acquiring a completely new atmosphere. The older peasants with whom we talked shook their heads doubtingly. Under the protection of the New Economic Policy and with the market for their farm products which the great construction camp in their midst offered, they were enjoying prosperous times. On the other hand, the educational propaganda which they heard at the new open-air theatre in the grounds of one of the late landlord's residences alarmed them. "When young people are taught this kind of nonsense," said one old village elder, "the devil alone knows where it will end."

The young people, on the other hand, were happy. Work was plentiful and the revolutionary prospect was bright. Wages were good and the district was not one in which the food shortage had made itself felt at any time. Personally I felt that my sympathies were with the young people, and I was inclined to disregard the older peasants' doubts and warnings.

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From Nova-Pavlovka we again crossed the steppes by touring-car to Rostov-on-the-Don. It was the time of the harvest, and we found the peasants living a gipsy-like life encamped in the fields. We talked with two bright and intelligent children whom we noticed playing round the covered cart that constituted their summer home. A baby slept in a crude hammock slung under the cart and shared with numerous dogs the shelter from the scorching sun which it afforded. The children were nearly nude and were a picture of health. They told us it was twelve kilometres to their village and that every year they lived some weeks up here on the steppes during the summer.

It was this conversation with these children that made me realize that as a general rule the Russian peasant differs from the smallholders in most countries in that he invariably lives in his village, whence he goes out to work on his holding. The system of allocating land to the peasants in long strips, which had been in vogue since the emancipation of the serfs in 1861, rendered it impossible for the Russian peasant to live on his holding as smallholders do in most countries.

The dust of the steppes at this time of year must be experienced to be fully appreciated. Long before we approached Rostov-on-the-Don across the open common that has now become the site of the Rostselmash—the Government's large new agricultural implement factory—our faces were encrusted with fine dust and we were parched with thirst. Difficulties, however, presented themselves in allaying our thirst because when we reached the

city we found that its entire water supply had been condemned. We discovered that a land subsidence in the upper part of the town had damaged the water and sewage systems, and some incompetent official entrusted with the repair work had succeeded in connecting the drains from the typhoid hospital to the main water supply. We were not surprised to learn later that the official had suffered the extreme penalty for his incompetence. We did not remain in Rostov, but went on immediately by train to Baku.

Until the development of the oil industry made Baku into a city of workers seething with racial hatred and industrial discontent, its chief importance lay in the fact that it was Russia's frontier port for trade across the Caspian Sea with Persia. In 1926 we found its quay-sides piled with fruit, rice, cotton, carpets and Eastern merchandise, in return for which beet sugar appeared to be the leading commodity being exported. The population of Baku is approximately 600,000, and includes Turki (who are Mahommedan), Armenians and Russians in approximately equal numbers. The official language is that of the Turki, i.e. Azerbaijanian.

From what we saw of the living conditions in remnants of pre-revolutionary Baku there is, unfortunately, no doubt whatsoever that the owners of the oil-fields under the old régime were guilty of astonishing callousness in the provision they made for the housing of their work-people. Nowhere have I seen such appalling housing conditions as those which existed in the so-called "black town" of

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Baku. The Azerbaijanian Soviet had, however, taken the matter in hand, and the whole city now had more the appearance of one vast construction camp than of an ancient trading centre. Demolition of old refineries and the disgraceful housing accommodation previously provided for workers was in progress everywhere ; new buildings were springing up on all sides ; in every street, traffic was impeded by excavations and street works in progress. On the oil-fields I found the same feverish reconstruction activities everywhere in evidence. Extensive new oil refineries were under construction and new oil-bearing areas were being developed. The wells in these new areas were being arranged and drilled in accordance with a regular and definite plan, and this part of the oil-field presented a striking contrast to the unplanned and promiscuous well-boring operations which had been allowed to occur under private ownership.

Baku is indeed a city of strange contrasts. Caravans of camels came in from the desert districts around, to be watered from earthenware vessels carried from deep wells, approached by long stairways cut in the rock. The voices of the muezzins on the minarets of the mosques could be heard calling the faithful to prayer. Since the Azerbaijanians belong to the Shi-ite group of Islam, many of the women were still veiled. On the other hand, a far-seeing national Azerbaijanian Government was urging forward the complete modernization of the oil industry and the city, apparently irrespective of cost, and was embarking on an extensive programme of educational and social reforms. I decided



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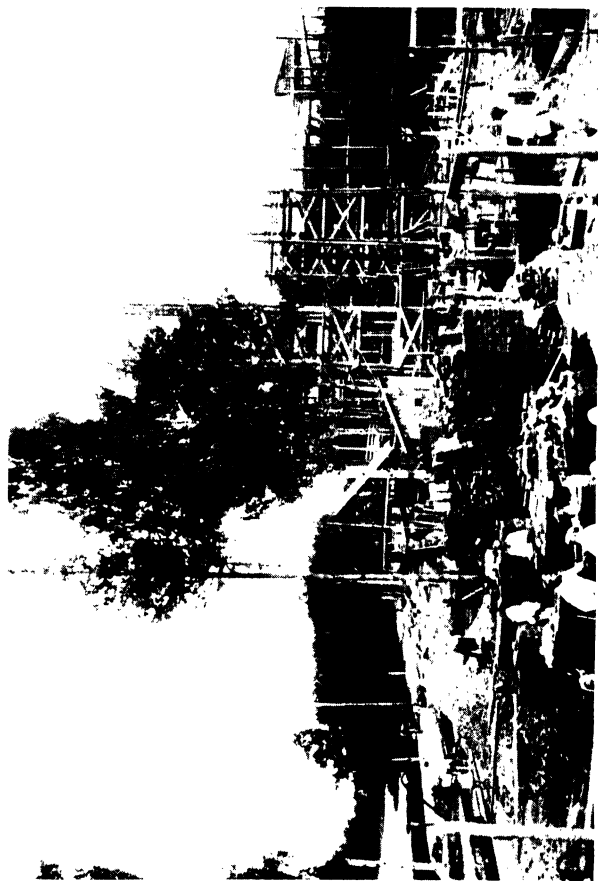
definitely that I would visit the place again in one or two years' time to note progress. Baku, it appeared to me, would present a fine example of the advantages which might accrue from the nationalization of a key industry and of town planning on a large scale.

After three interesting days in the dust and stifling heat of Baku, we crossed through Trans-Caucasia to Batoum.

Batoum is essentially a Turkish town, having become Russian as recently as 1878. It is almost sub-tropical : New Zealand palms and tropical vegetation flourish along its boulevards. Here we found another small nationality struggling to establish its own national rights and status. In a room at the back of the primitive hotel in which we were staying some score of young Adzharians assembled each evening for instruction in their national language and in singing their National Anthem. These people are Mahommedans, but differ from the Azerbaijanians in that they belong to the Sunni division of Islam, to which, incidentally, the great majority of Mahomet's followers belong.

During our three days' stay in Batoum we spent many hours on the hills behind the town in the districts now being rapidly developed by the Soviet Government as tea plantations. Here we met the captain of a British oil tanker, who gave us news of the General Strike in Great Britain, about which we had up to then heard practically nothing, although it had been settled some weeks earlier.

From Batoum we crossed the Suram Pass to Tiflis, the capital of Georgia—a country which has



COMMENCING WORK AT SHATURA POWER STATION—1923  
This was one of the first steps in the G.O.E.L.R.O. electrification plan



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only of recent years rejected mediæval customs and modes of life. The Georgians are a fine-built, vigorous and able race who are the proud possessors of a long history. They are the direct descendants of the true Caucasian people, from which stock practically all the white European nations originally sprang. Their country—Iberia of the Romans—had been a kingdom for over two thousand years when it was annexed to the Russian Empire in 1801.

Modern Tiflis is also a city of extraordinary contrasts. Its central part, which houses the Government of the Trans-Caucasian Federation, has many fine modern public buildings, well-lit streets, and public gardens. In the older quarter of the town, which lies below the ruins of an ancient castle, it was indeed difficult to appreciate that one was still in Europe. Here we found Georgians, Armenians, Turki and tribesmen of many hill tribes in their national costumes jostling each other in those quaint open-fronted shops where Caucasian pottery, bright costumes and jewelled daggers exchange hands for Soviet currency notes. The narrow streets were overhung by shady balconies, from which dark-eyed women and children threw curious glances at us as we passed below.

In the evening we visited a typical Caucasian cellar restaurant, or *duchan*. The place had a low ceiling and the atmosphere was heavy with tobacco smoke. In the centre of the tiled floor was a fish-pond filled with small fish that had the appearance of mountain trout. It was apparently the custom for those ordering fish for their meal to make their

selection from the live fish in the pool. We were unable properly to express ourselves to the waiters, who knew little Russian, but subsequently we managed to convey to them that we wished to have a typical Georgian supper. They brought us fried fish, followed by *shashliki*. This latter dish consists of alternate slices of mutton and onion grilled and brought to table on a dagger-like skewer. The fish were taken from the pond and brought wriggling in a net for our approval, before being sent to the grill. Whilst we awaited this meal we were treated to a *hors d'œuvre* course of spring onions and unleavened bread, with which we drank red wine.

The minimum quantity of red wine which we found we could order was a quarter of a bucketful, the cost of which was only 1s. 8d. The meal finished with unleavened bread, goat's-milk cheese and the ever-present spring onions. Later in the evening a Caucasian railway engineer whom I knew well joined us, and his presence resulted in others coming to our table to assist us with our immense portion of wine. Before the night was over, however, our Caucasian guests had accounted for still another half bucket of red claret, and this had sufficiently loosened their tongues to enable us to hear much of their mode of life and their difficulties. A party of students was celebrating some special occasion, and they treated us to their national songs; and before we left that cellar at midnight there were probably very few of the folk-songs of Caucasia which we had not heard.

After leaving Tiflis we visited Mtskheta, the ancient capital of Georgia, long famed for its cathedral,

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which dates back to the fourth century. Here too we saw the monastery associated with the life of St. Nina. Also, high on the hills of the opposite bank of the Aragva River was perched the monastery of Mtsouri, immortalized in Russian literature by Lermantov's poem. As a strange contrast to these ancient and mediæval monuments we saw under construction at Mtskhét the modern hydro-electric power station of Zemi-avchal. This power station, which is calculated to deliver 26,500 kilowatts to the Caucasian power network, was the first of a series of water-power stations figuring in the original G.O.E.L.R.O. plan.

From Mtskhét we set out on a hundred and fifty mile journey over the main range of the Caucasus by the Georgian military highway. We made this journey on the motor vehicle which carried the mail. The chauffeur was a Georgian, and my wife and I sat alongside him. Behind us was a Russian commissar and his wife and two Germans. Two O.G.P.U. soldiers completed the party, sitting on the mail-bags at the back with their rifles ready to repulse attack by brigands, which apparently often occurs on this road. Early in the forenoon we spent an hour in Doushet—another mediæval Georgian town where even our motor mail-car seemed strangely out of place. From here the scenery as we ascended the valley of the Aragva River increased in grandeur. Near the top of the Mletski ascent, the children of the tribesmen came out on to the roadside and showered handfuls of spring wild flowers and wild azaleas into our car. After crossing the highest point of the road on the Guduar Pass,

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which is approximately 8,000 feet above sea-level, we dropped down into the deep gorge of the Terek River, stopping for a meal at the little village of Kazbek, where we had tea on a terrace, with the snow-clad summit of Mount Kazbek itself towering 11,446 feet above us.

At Vladikavkaz we chartered an open touring-car to take us the last twenty-five miles to the station at Beslan, where we wished to catch an express going north. This short journey was full of adventure. Our driver did not know the road, and called upon a Caucasian of most forbidding appearance, armed with a revolver and several knives, to pilot us. If we had any qualms about the *bona fides* of our chauffeur and pilot, we were soon to forget them, because hardly had we set out across the open country, which was here almost devoid of roads, than night suddenly descended upon us and one of those terrific thunderstorms which visit the district in summer broke. It was only a matter of minutes before the road became a quagmire, and, as the wheels of our car ploughed up the mud, progress became slower and slower. Despite their ruffian-like appearance, our chauffeur and pilot were splendid fellows, and after herculean efforts they delivered us, soaked to the skin, but safely, to the railway station at Beslan. Two days later we once more found ourselves crossing the steppes back to Nova-Pavlovka—once more covered with the hot, fine dust of the bare and treeless steppes.

We had completed a short tour of the Caucasus, and had spent two weeks in a country where the tribesmen and the peasantry have little in common

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with the peoples of Muscovy and the Ukraine. I began to appreciate the great achievement which the Soviet Government had already in 1926 succeeded in accomplishing, in persuading and forcing the many nationalities of the Caucasus to abandon the tribal feuds and national jealousies that have existed for centuries, and work together for a common cause. I realized too that the Caucasus was but one of the areas peopled by tribesmen and nationalities which no stretch of the imagination could call Europeans, but which the Soviet Government had set itself the task of bringing into the Soviet Union. Central Asia, Turkestan and Siberia surely afforded an even more difficult problem than the Caucasus, in forming the Soviet Union.

Something of this great task may be appreciated from the following particulars of the Republics and States which now come under the Congress of Soviets and its executive council sitting in Moscow. The population figures are quoted from the *Soviet Union Year Book* for 1930 and represent the census returns for 1926, since which date the population has grown considerably in parts of the Union.

The Union of Socialist Soviet Republics comprises :

(1) The Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic (approximate area 7,650,000 square miles, total population 100,858,000) including the following autonomous republics :

(a) Baskir Republic, in the Southern Urals, with its capital at Ufa.

(b) Buriat-Mongolian Republic, in Central Siberia.

(c) Daghestan Republic, in the North-Eastern Caucasus.



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- (d) Kazak Republic, which includes the greater part of South-Western Siberia.
- (e) Karelian Republic, on the eastern frontier of Finland.
- (f) Kirghiz Republic, bordering on the western frontier of Sin-Kiang.
- (g) Crimean Republic.
- (h) German-Volga Republic (i.e. the German colonies established on the Lower Volga during the reign of Catherine II).
- (i) Tartar Republic, on the Middle Volga, with its capital at Kazan.
- (j) Chuvash Republic, on the Middle Volga.
- (k) Yakutsk Republic, covering an area of 1,550,000 square miles in North-Eastern Siberia.

The R.S.F.S.R. extends from Smolensk to the Far East and includes the Pacific sea-board from Vladivostock to the Bering Strait.

- (2) The Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic (approximate area 174,000 square miles, total population 29,020,300), including one autonomous republic, i.e. Moldavia, adjoining the Roumanian (Bessarabian) frontier.
- (3) The White Russian Socialist Soviet Republic (approximate area 48,900 square miles, total population 4,983,900).
- (4) The Trans-Caucasian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic (approximate area 71,800 square miles, total population 5,850,700), including Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia. The Azerbaijanian Republic has one autonomous State, i.e. Nakhichevan. The Georgian Republic has Abhasia and Adzharsk as autonomous attached States.
- (5) The Uzbek Socialist Soviet Republic (approximate area 63,800 square miles, total population 5,270,200). This mountainous republic lies on the north of the Hindu Kush, and borders on Afghanistan.

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- (6) The Turkomen Socialist Soviet Republic (approximate area 191,000 square miles, total population 1,030,500). This republic lies immediately north of Persia.
- (7) The Tadzhik Socialist Soviet Republic (approximate area 56,100 square miles, total population less than one million). This territory lies east of the Uzbek Republic and borders on British India.

During the Congress of the Soviets which assembles from time to time in Moscow, I have watched the delegates from these far-flung territories assemble in the "Big Theatre" which serves as meeting-place for the Congress until such time as the Palace of the Soviets is completed. Mongolians, Tadzhiks, Baskirs, Uzbeks, Yakuts, and some scores of other nationalities representing peoples of almost every creed, stand together in respectful silence as the "International" is played. Later in the proceedings they pass a unanimous vote of confidence in their Central Executive Committee. Outwardly, at any rate, such unanimity of purpose and action would appear a great achievement. In another chapter it will be shown what influences exist to ensure this unanimity.

My visit to the Caucasus in 1926 was by no means my last visit to this interesting territory. I have visited Baku on numerous occasions, and some description of what I have seen there is set forth in the chapter in which the results of the Five Year Plan in industry are dealt with. In the summer of 1931 I accompanied a party of directors of the Metropolitan Vickers Electrical Company on an aerial visit to the Caucasus. We flew from Moscow to Rostov-on-the-Don, and thence to Tuapse and

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Sotchi, on the Black Sea coast. After a night's rest at this most favourite watering-place on Russia's Riviera, we flew along the coast as far as Sukhum and thence inland to Kutais. From Kutais we made the somewhat risky flight over the Suram Pass to Tiflis. The scenery during this flight was magnificent, since we had the Caucasian main range, with its chain of five peaks all higher than Mont Blanc, on one side of us, and on the other side we looked over into the mountains stretching away into Turkey and Armenia to Mount Ararat. Subsequently we flew to Baku and back again to Tiflis, where we spent some days investigating the proposals for electrifying a section of the railway which carries the products of the Azerbaijanian oil-fields to the Black Sea at Batoum. Our investigations included our visiting the section of line which runs down the Suram Pass into the astonishingly fertile valleys of the Rion River and its tributaries. Here the peasants are able to get two and three crops per year, but I noticed that the women appeared to bear the brunt of the burden of cultivating the land. The idle habits of the men and their domineering attitude towards their women-folk did not create a good impression. I was much interested to find the bakers here employing beehive-shaped ovens not dissimilar to those used by the Indians in Arizona. Unleavened bread is plastered on to the heated upper surface of the oven wall, and when cooked it falls off.

At Zestafoni we requested permission to visit a cognac distillery, but when we found that the authorities were perfectly agreeable to our visiting the place provided we did them the honour of

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sampling the score or more different brands of cognac which they produce, we abandoned the idea. During our visit to this district we were provided with a railway saloon for our use, which we learnt had previously been the private coach of the Tsar's two eldest daughters. It was certainly a beautifully fitted coach, but there was something in the knowledge that the bed which I occupied had been built for the ill-fated Princess Tatiana Nikolaevna that made me glad to leave the train on our return to Tiflis. As we flew back to Moscow I endeavoured to analyse that uneasy feeling—but I could not do so.

## CHAPTER X

### THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY

WHEN THE leaders of the Bolshevik section of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party found themselves in control of Russia at the end of 1917, they did not immediately introduce the sweeping reforms which it had been generally assumed that they would make. Lenin knew well that the complete realization of the Marxian programme of reform would take many years—possibly some generations—to accomplish, and thus he found it necessary to introduce various temporary expedients in order to enable the country to continue to exist until such time as it was possible to educate the workers and the people generally to take the control into their own hands. The Dictatorship of the Proletariat which now exists in the U.S.S.R. is in itself only regarded as a step towards the attainment of a completely Communist State in the future.

During the early years of the present régime, Lenin and his associates found it necessary to conscript the whole of the country's industrial resources in order to enable their Government to repel the onslaught of the interventionist armies which were then attacking them from all sides. This period of general conscription is known as the period of Military Communism, and was characterized by the introduction of a system of barter and payment

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of industrial workers with "commodity cards," entitling them to receive food, clothing and fuel. The period also saw the introduction of a system of compulsory grain collections from the peasants. Under the terms of a State grain monopoly, private dealing in grain, either by the peasants or others, was impossible. The prices which the Government paid the peasantry for grain were altogether disproportionate to the cost of such commodities as could be bought. This state of affairs caused discontent to become widespread in the agricultural districts.

At the end of 1920, it was obvious that some drastic change was necessary if complete economic collapse was to be averted, but it was not until the food and fuel shortages in the industrial towns, and the unrest amongst the peasants, had resulted in rebellions at Kronstadt and elsewhere early in 1921, that Lenin succeeded in introducing his first move towards what afterwards came to be known as the New Economic Policy (N.E.P.). The first step was the abandonment of compulsory grain collections and the establishment of an agricultural tax in kind. This enabled the peasants to sell their surplus grain and agricultural products privately.

On August 9th, 1921, a decree was issued permitting freedom of private trading within the country, and allowing private individuals to develop certain small industries. *It also legalized overtime and piece-work payments for labour, and encouraged foreign capital to take up concessions in the country.* In other words, this decree established private trading, and made commercial transactions

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possible with foreign countries. Many of the smaller nationalized factories and works passed back into the hands of private individuals and concessionaires. Amongst the foreign concessions which were arranged about this time, the Lena Gold Field concession, the Harriman concession for operating the Chiatura Manganese mines, and the Swedish General Electric Co. (A.S.E.A.) concession may be cited as examples. A number of so-called "mixed companies," in which the Soviet Government held shares with concessionaires, were also formed.

At the same time, the Government abandoned the rigidly centralized control of all industry, which civil war conditions had made necessary, and introduced a new system by which industries were grouped into trusts. These trusts were permitted to operate the industrial concerns entrusted to them as individual firms, answering only in a general way to the Supreme Economic Council in Moscow. In various industries more than one trust was created, and thus the individual trusts came into competition with one another. The trustees of such trusts were in much the same position as the directors of limited companies are in Great Britain. At the end of 1922, almost seventy-five per cent of Russia's industry was in the hands of State trusts operating in this way, and turning over any profits they made to the State, after providing for development charges and welfare work.

During the years of the civil war, the previously existing facilities for the distribution of food and commodities had been destroyed. Private trading

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had almost ceased to exist. The old co-operative organizations were inadequate to cope with the demands which the new conditions made upon them. Thus it was that, during the first years of the New Economic Policy, a determined effort was made to establish large co-operative distributing organizations. Many of these organizations rapidly became sufficiently powerful to establish their own trading organizations in foreign countries. In the cities of the U.S.S.R. the co-operative societies which were then established have now become increasingly powerful, as the retrenchment from the New Economic Policy allowed them to absorb the businesses which had been established by Nepmen.

The changes in the organization of industry and trade necessitated the re-establishment of a banking and monetary system and the introduction of a stable currency. The State Bank of the U.S.S.R. (Gosbank) was established in November 1921. According to its present constitution, the functions of Gosbank are : " To regulate the currency circulation and provide short-term credits for industry, agriculture, commerce, transport, and other branches of national economy." The State Bank also exercises a large degree of control over the many other banking and credit institutions, which the New Economic Policy, and latterly the great industrial development plan, made necessary. The Bank of Industry and Trade, the Bank of Foreign Trade, the All Union Co-operative Bank, and the Bank of Russian Trade in London, may be instanced as banks which came into existence during this period.



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These changes also resulted in the system of barter, payment in kind, and commodity cards being discontinued in industry and elsewhere, and, once again, money, as a means of rewarding labour and of assisting the exchange of commodities, began to circulate.

In 1922 a new currency based on the chervonetz (ten roubles) was announced. The old rouble currency then rapidly lost its value. When I arrived in Moscow, early in 1924, I found myself asked by a cabman to pay him some forty million roubles to take me to my hotel. He would have been willing to drive me five times as far for a one-chervonetz note. In March 1924 the old paper currency was discontinued by decree, and replaced by a new paper currency based on the chervonetz. In August of the same year, large quantities of a new silver coinage came into circulation, and in this connection it may be interesting to note that a great part of the first issue of silver coinage was minted in Great Britain. In September 1924, I sailed, on the S.S. *Tobolsk*, from the West India Docks to Leningrad, and this ship carried over one hundred and fifty tons of silver, including ninety-four tons of the new small coinage.

In the autumn of 1924 the results of the New Economic Policy were visible on all sides. The kulaks in the villages had quickly taken advantage of the situation to enrich themselves, and the peasants as a whole were enjoying a short period of comparative prosperity. The middlemen and the private traders in the towns and cities had been enabled to make large profits. Many small manufacturers had been quick to re-establish

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themselves, and reap a rich harvest in supplying the shortage of commodities.

The boarded-up shop-windows of Moscow and Leningrad were rapidly giving place to more or less prosperous-looking retail establishments. Restaurants in the cities were reopening, and, night after night, the newly enriched Nepmen could be found there spending their easily acquired gains.

Statistics show that following the introduction of the New Economic Policy the exports of the U.S.S.R. grew by leaps and bounds. In the year 1920 the total exports were valued at only 1.4 million roubles. In the following year they were 20.2 millions, and in 1922 they reached 81.6 millions. During the following two years they were 205.8 and 311 millions respectively ; rising to 709.4 millions (reckoned at the same pre-war basis rate) in 1929. Imports increased almost proportionately.

During the first years of N.E.P., however, the prices of commodities rose steadily, until, in 1923, they reached a point where they were nearly eighty-five per cent above pre-war prices, whereas the prices of agricultural products had fallen to some sixty per cent of those obtaining in pre-war times. The curves showing the rise in the price of commodities, and the fall in the price of agricultural products, had the appearance of an opened pair of scissors, and hence Trotski gave the name "Scissors" to this state of affairs. He made an appeal to bring down commodity prices, and thus "close the scissors," asserting that this was the only way to avert economic disaster. This "closing of the scissors" was in fact undertaken and almost

accomplished in the year 1924, although the disproportion in value was to again make itself evident in the years that followed.

There were naturally many Communists who did not fully approve the "capitulation to private enterprise and private capitalism," which they argued the New Economic Policy constituted, and hence it was that in 1924 a slow policy of retrenchment began. Acting on general instructions from the political chiefs in Moscow, the tax collectors commenced to demand extortionate taxes from private traders, industrialists and kulaks. The taxes levied were altogether excessive and out of proportion to the turnovers or incomes of the unfortunate Nepmen. Long before 1927 this policy had become general, and a large percentage of private traders had been forced to abandon the unequal fight and close down their establishments.

I knew a typical case of this sort in Leningrad, where three old employees of the great provisioning firm of Elyseev opened a small shop for selling hams, dried fish, caviare and other *sakuska* (*hors-d'œuvres*) products. The business prospered until a tax collector called and demanded a turnover tax on an imaginary figure amounting to several times their actual turnover. Payment was obviously impossible, and the ultimate result was that the members of this enterprising little group of distributors were called upon by the O.G.P.U. late one night, and within a very short time found themselves members of a labour gang going northwards.

In 1927 and 1928 I occupied a summer bungalow some thirty miles from Leningrad, and here I

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met many peasants. They had prospered under the New Economic Policy, but already, in 1927, they were feeling the pinch of excessive demands from the tax collectors. The Government were then obviously endeavouring to rectify the bad mistake which they made in 1917, when they permitted the peasants to grab the land of the great landowners for their own use instead of carrying on these well-run farms as State enterprises. Presumably Lenin and his colleagues did this to appease the peasantry and win them over to support his régime, but it always seems to me that the cutting up of the large estates, and their division amongst the individual peasants, at the beginning of the Bolshevik revolution, was a great mistake.

Although the New Economic Policy was finally crushed, during the first Five Year Plan it certainly fulfilled the object which apparently Lenin had in view when he introduced it. It re-established the economic life of the country as a whole, and industry in particular. It instituted a monetary and banking system, and allowed foreign trade to be properly organized. Indirectly it restored the principles of private ownership, which, despite the depredations of the tax collectors, still remains to a very limited extent in as much as Soviet citizens are still encouraged to build dwellings for their own use. It raised the hopes of millions, only to dash them to the ground at a later date. It is small wonder that the peasants of to-day are somewhat sceptical when the Moscow Government announces new legislation, apparently designed to lessen the burdens of taxation which they are compelled to carry.

## CHAPTER XI

### LENINGRAD, 1927-1930

DURING the many short business visits which I made to Petrograd in the years 1914-1918, I had been able to appreciate the fact that the city which Peter the Great had planned, and commenced to build, on the marshy delta of the Neva, was a city of extraordinary beauty and interest. It was, therefore, with considerable satisfaction that I proceeded to Leningrad, in December 1925, to take charge of the erection of the electrical equipment of seven sub-stations, destined to distribute the electric power from the Volchovstroï hydro-electric station. This work was succeeded by other and more important contracts which necessitated my residing in Leningrad until the spring of 1929. In the course of those three and a half years, I came to know the city well and formed many associations.

St. Petersburg of the pre-war days became Petrograd in the first days of the Great War, when the abolition of German names was in vogue. On April 22nd, 1920, the name Petrograd was changed, by decree, to Leningrad. The city was laid out two hundred and forty years ago as a "northern Venice," but several of the canals which originally existed have now been filled in and made into wide boulevards. In area Leningrad is one of the six greatest cities in the world, although its present

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population is only about 2,350,000. The wide reaches of the Neva along its quays show its palaces and its public buildings, including the Cathedral of St. Isaac, to their best advantage. The views from the bridges over the Neva have few equals amongst the great capitals of Europe. Some miles distant from the city lie the small towns of Tsarskoe (now Detskoe) Selo, Peterhoff and Gatchina, where successive emperors have vied with each other in the building of great palaces. In the centre of Leningrad lies the Fortress of Peter and Paul, where Communist guides show the visitors the cells and the dungeons in which the autocratic rulers of pre-war Russia confined their political prisoners. The Fortress Church afforded a burial place for the later Russian emperors, but their tombs were despoiled during the revolution. It is a fortunate fact that the world-renowned museums of the city, including the Hermitage and the Alexander III museum, have lost nothing of their treasures during the troublous days of 1917 and 1918.

At the end of 1925, Leningrad presented the appearance of being a derelict. The extremes of the Russian climate cause rapid deterioration to paint and plaster unless careful maintenance work is done almost yearly, and thus the ten years of neglect from 1916 onwards had resulted in the majority of the buildings falling into a state of dilapidation and disrepair which was pitiable to behold. The situation had not been improved by the disastrous flood of September 1924, when a strong westerly wind had brought the waters of the Gulf of Finland into the city, flooding the main streets to a depth of

several feet. This flood had destroyed the gas-works, and consequently, at night-time, the streets, which had previously been gas-lit, were in total darkness. The flood had also washed away the wood-paving of the majority of the main thoroughfares. In many districts the destruction wrought during the fighting of the revolution and the civil war was still apparent.

The world famous Nevski-Prospect—that great street which, in Tsarist days, had been so full of colour and the busy life of a great capital—was now almost deserted. Its surface was still only partially restored after the flood. An occasional motor-car passed along, but over-crowded tramcars formed the greater part of its wheeled traffic. The bright uniforms of the officers of the Imperial armies and the Parisian dresses of the women of St. Petersburg's aristocracy had given place to the simple khaki of the Red Army and the drab clothing of a distinctly proletarian population. The name of the street itself had been changed. It was now "The Prospect of the 25th October."

In January 1926 it had become apparent that my stay in Leningrad would last for a year or more, hence I commenced to seek for suitable housing accommodation. In the course of my enquiries I found that the great majority of the spacious flats and residences of the old aristocracy and the wealthy residents of St. Petersburg had already been converted into communal dwellings for Leningrad's workers. In pre-revolutionary days the majority of the workers had lived on the outskirts of the city in wooden two-storey dwellings. During the winters of

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1919, 1920 and 1921, when famine and disorder reigned, many hundreds of these wooden dwellings in the outlying districts had been pulled down and used for fuel, and their occupants had moved into the city and had been housed in the accommodation left vacant by the dispossessed and scattered aristocracy. The sanitary condition of the city at this time was alarming.

The flat which I ultimately rented, and made into a headquarters for the British engineering staff employed at Volchovstroï, had previously belonged to the Obolenski family, who, in pre-revolutionary Russia, had occupied a unique position among the titled families surrounding the Tsar's Court. During the time which had elapsed since its original occupiers had fled from St. Petersburg the flat had been used to house troops ; and latterly had been a communal dwelling for work-people. The condition into which it had been allowed to lapse was appalling. The figures on the artistically painted ceiling of the drawing-room had obviously been used for target practice. Expensive mirrors had been wantonly broken, and apparently no effort whatsoever had been made to maintain any part of the premises in a clean and sanitary condition.

My duties in Leningrad during the period 1926-1929 brought me into close touch with the group of engineers and technicians responsible for building the first great hydro-electric power station to be completed in U.S.S.R.—Volchovstroï. This is one of those great undertakings which have been permitted under Lenin's electrification scheme, and, although £11,000,000 were expended on carrying



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it into execution, the Soviet Government felt themselves justified in proceeding with the work in order that the power supply of Leningrad should not be entirely dependent on coal imported into the district from Southern Russia. The strategic importance of this decision is obvious.

I never wish to be associated with a keener or more enthusiastic group of workers. The *esprit de corps* and enthusiasm with which the Volchovstroï staff tackled the great work with which they had been entrusted constituted a fine example of what could be accomplished in the U.S.S.R. under proper leadership and control. Professor Graftio, who was the head of this organization, commanded respect, and his entire staff loyally supported him. The social evenings which were regularly organized by the staff at Volchovstroï, and which Professor Graftio himself very frequently attended, will always leave very happy recollections in my mind.

It must be remembered that during these years the results of the New Economic Policy were more apparent than at any other time. Shutters were pulled down and private shops were opened. House Committees commenced to make repairs to the houses under their charge, and the city authorities themselves gave the Winter Palace, the old General Staff, the Admiralty and other great public buildings, a much-needed coat of paint. New sewerage and street-lighting systems were proceeded with as quickly as possible in order to replace the damage done during the floods of 1924. Several large restaurants reopened, and, generally speaking, there existed a feeling that conditions were steadily improving.

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My work also brought me into contact with many academic workers in Leningrad's University and technical institutes.

I found that the older students who were then finishing their courses were of much the same education and calibre as one would expect to find in a British college of the same kind. They were extraordinarily keen and theoretically well grounded. Most of them read and spoke two languages as well as Russian—usually German and English. On the other hand, the younger students, those of 1925-1926 and later, were for the most part young men from quite a different class, and were distinctly poorly grounded—in fact, I was often not a little astonished that students with such a poor preliminary education had been accepted. Enquiries which I made showed that only a limited number of students was at that time being admitted from families belonging to the old *intelligentsia* class, and that these technical colleges were being forced to accept as students large numbers of young workmen whose preliminary training in the "Workers' Faculties" had been insufficient to allow them to take full advantage of the university courses. Amongst these younger students much attention was being paid to political and so called "social" work.

It is probably not generally recognized that Leningrad is one of the largest seats of learning in the world. Its Academy of Science was founded more than two hundred and fifty years ago, and has an almost unique record of scientific achievement. At the present time there are more than forty colleges and institutes of university standing in the

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city. The Soviet Government has also concentrated in Leningrad much of the scientific work which it has undertaken, and there are more than one hundred and fifty scientific research bodies which have their headquarters there.

During the years which I lived in Leningrad, and subsequently, I have had opportunities to visit a number of these laboratories and institutes, and I found that in their facilities for conducting advanced research work they were possessed of the most modern and up-to-date equipment, and the majority of the men controlling the work are men whose names are world-known in their various professions.

Amongst the leading scientists whom it was my privilege to meet in Leningrad was Professor I. P. Pavlov, the medical-research worker, whose work on the stomach, and latterly the brain, has made him world famous. He showed me round his laboratories, where experiments on the brain were being conducted on some scores of dogs. I found the work intensely interesting, and failed to find any signs of suffering or cruelty amongst the animals which were being subjected to his experiments. I was not a little surprised to find that one or two dogs seemed almost pleased to enter the silent observation rooms and take up their places on the observation tables, wagging their tails in anticipation of the tasty morsels which they were given at certain stages in the proceedings. In Pavlov himself I found a wonderful septuagenarian. He told me that he still played a strong game of Gorodki, and frequently swam half a mile in the lake which lies near his summer home. He is completely

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ambidextrous, and his associates told me that he could perform a certain operation in a dog's head in twenty-seven seconds, whereas the average surgeon took something like a minute to do the same operation. Pavlov showed me, with pride, a decree, which Lenin himself had issued during the famine of 1921, enabling him to feed his dogs and continue his work on the study of the brain. He also told me that the only other British visitor to whom he had shown his laboratories up to that time was Mr. H. G. Wells, and I was not surprised to find that Mr. Wells had referred to Pavlov as "a star which lights the world, shining down a vista hitherto unexplored."

The eminent physicist, Professor Joffe, was another of the great scientists with whom I came into contact during those years.

In the early days of 1932, it was my privilege to accompany the special delegation which Sir Robert Hadfield sent to Leningrad to present souvenirs of the Faraday Centenary to the Academy of Sciences. In this connection we were received by the octogenarian President, Professor Karpinski. Despite his age, the old and much-respected President of the Academy of Sciences showed a keenness and interest in the work which the scientific institutions of Leningrad were doing which would serve as a fine example to many younger men in prominent positions.

During the years 1927-1930, an Engineers' Club was in existence in Leningrad, where the engineers of the old intelligentsia made a practice of assembling at regular intervals during the winter. These functions were at first exceedingly enjoyable

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affairs, but by degrees the membership was extended, and on my last visit to the club in 1930 I found an entirely new and changed atmosphere existing. Few, if any, of the old intelligentsia were present, and the club was crowded with young Communist engineers and technicians and their women acquaintances. Whereas we British engineers, as foreigners, had previously been welcome guests, we were apparently no longer welcome in 1930. The young people had quite obviously come to look upon us with suspicion, and such of the old intelligentsia as we did meet in these later days were terrified to be seen in personal contact with foreigners. The reign of fear had begun among the intelligentsia, and among our many old Russian friends there were very few—only one or two bolder spirits—who dared to risk the suspicion under which they would find themselves from the O.G.P.U. if they associated with us. By the end of the winter of 1929-1930, the happy and optimistic enthusiasm which had characterized the engineering staff during the building of Volchovstroi had gone—suspicion and fear had begun to take their place, and from that time forward the life of the foreign specialist in the U.S.S.R. was made increasingly difficult by the impossibility of any free social intercourse with the Russian intelligentsia. Russians who were willing to associate freely with foreigners labelled themselves either as O.G.P.U. agents or people whose mentality did not enable them to appreciate the risks which they were running. During the "Industrial Party Trial" in 1930 almost every Russian engineer who had been in any

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contact whatever with the British engineers of the Metropolitan Vickers Electrical Company was subjected to interrogation by the O.G.P.U., and some thirty to forty of my own acquaintances were imprisoned.

In the summer of 1929 I rented rooms in the forest residence of a Professor of Engineering, at a delightful little village on a secluded lake near the Finnish frontier. Here, with my wife and children and friends, I spent a very enjoyable summer. We had very little contact with our landlord and his family as they were seldom at home. Three months later I was informed that he had been cross-examined by the O.G.P.U., and the following spring, when the question of renting the empty flat in his house was again approached, he was not prepared even to discuss letting his place to foreigners again, and no offer would tempt him to do so.

The atmosphere thus created did not tend to make business dealings with Russian engineers and technical staffs easy. It became necessary at all times to take steps to ensure that Communists were present at our meetings, otherwise the uneasiness which non-party engineers showed at being left alone with foreigners was too obvious and made negotiations difficult.

From the commencement of the revolution, Leningrad has constituted one of the keystones in the Soviet structure. It was here that the revolution started, and it was the work-people of Leningrad who supported Lenin and his associates when the first Soviet Government was established. Although the centre of government has now been moved to

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Moscow, the Soviet treat the proletariat of Leningrad with great consideration, and it is probably for this reason and no other that considerable industrial developments have been permitted in the Leningrad area under the Five Year Plan, for otherwise the geographical position of the city obviously would not justify its being developed as an industrial manufacturing centre.

## CHAPTER XII

### AN ELECTION AND THE STRUCTURE OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT

VIVID FLASHES of lightning and the continuous rolling of thunder heralded the approach of one of those severe evening thunderstorms which are characteristic of the peat bog district of Central European Russia in midsummer. Heavy drops of rain began to fall as my colleague—another British engineer—and I ran for shelter to the nearest building, which happened to be the newly erected Social Club of the construction settlement in which we were living at Chornoe Ozero. Enough has already been said regarding this settlement to convey the impression that it is typical of the many scores of similar new industrial townships which have been formed in the U.S.S.R. during recent years for housing the staff and workers employed in carrying out large constructional schemes. As we gained the verandah of the club the deluge commenced, accompanied by wind of almost hurricane force. We stepped inside the assembly room, where we were made welcome by one of the leading local Communist Party workers, whom we knew well. A musical programme was just being concluded, and our Communist friend told us that it was election day, and that the main business of the evening was to follow immediately. He gave us permission to



remain to witness the interesting proceedings. I was indeed grateful to the thunderstorm, which was by this time raging outside, because I had long wished to see how the local elections, which form the basis of the whole electoral system, were conducted.

Five men, all carrying black leather portfolios, and a young woman, seated themselves at the table on the platform. The young woman was clad in a black leather coat, and wore a peaked cap of the type usually associated with Moscow chauffeurs. She had that hard expression of earnestness and worried responsibility which political agitators in the U.S.S.R. seem to consider it necessary to cultivate.

As soon as these political workers had arranged themselves and their portfolios at the table, one of their number, who was obviously acting as chairman, looked quickly over to the orchestra, and, jerking his head as a signal of command, he shouted almost impatiently "Davai," which rough command can nearest be interpreted by the words "Come on—give us it." The band promptly obliged with the "International," during which the audience stood.

Again shouting his words rather than speaking, this chairman—a strong-faced bearded man of about thirty-five, clad in the typical costume of a Russian worker—announced that the object of the meeting was to elect members to the local Soviet. We then listened for two hours to harangues extolling the great work which the Soviets claimed to have done, and outlining their plans for the future. Obviously some of the speakers themselves were employing

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forms of words the meaning of which they could hardly have understood. We were told of the "crumbling Capitalist régime" in Great Britain and America. We heard comparative figures rolled off until our minds could cope with no more, and finally we were assured that all the meeting had to do was to agree with the recommendation of the local Communist organizations and elect three comrades who were named and indicated, and who could be relied upon to carry on the good work which had been described, and thus bring the great plan to a satisfactory and victorious conclusion.

The speeches over, the orchestra once again struck up the "International," and again the audience rose. The question was then put: "Has anyone anything to say against the proposal?" Not a dissentient voice was lifted. Communist youths sitting in the audience and O.G.P.U. officials standing near the platform smiled confidently. A young man asked one or two questions, which were answered. A show of hands then elected the nominees of the local Party committee, and thus three representatives went forward to take their places in the District Congress of Soviets.

According to the Constitution, this District Congress of Soviets should include delegates from rural Soviets, and from urban district Soviets, where the population of the district does not exceed 10,000. It also should include delegates from towns, factories and works, which have their own Soviets. Towns, factories and works are permitted one delegate per two hundred electors, but rural Soviets are allowed only one delegate per thousand inhabitants.

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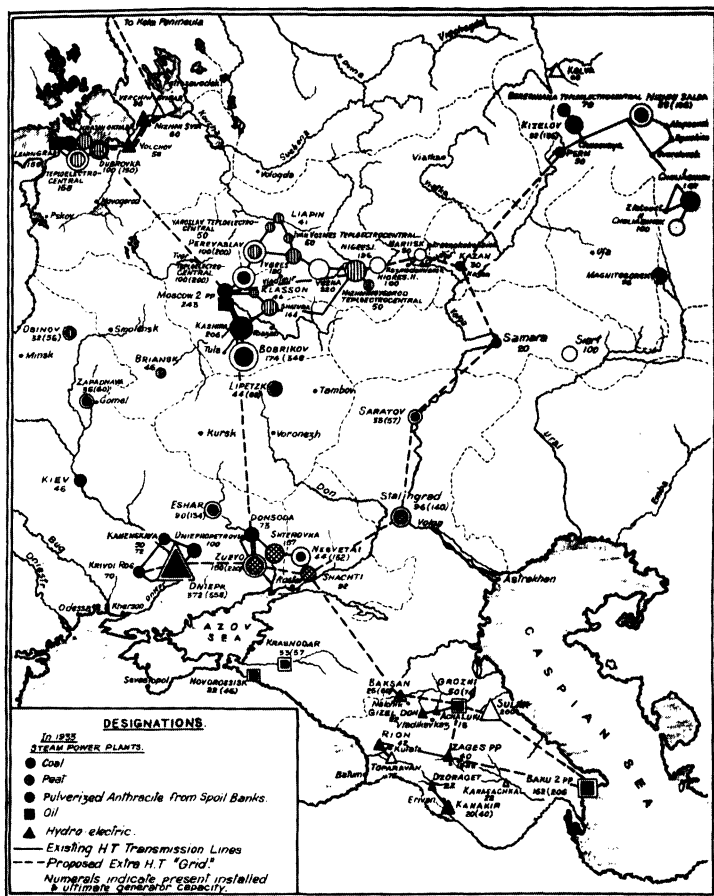
In the provincial and regional Congresses of Soviets, the same disproportionate relationship between the number of delegates elected by the industrial areas and the peasantry is to be found.

Elections to the Congress of Soviets of the constituent republics of the Union are based on the returning of one delegate per 25,000 inhabitants of the urban and industrial districts, and only one per 125,000 from the provincial and country districts. The Congress of Soviets of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, which is the supreme governing organ of the U.S.S.R., is elected by the provincial and the republican Congresses of Soviets on the same basis, and therefore comprises approximately 1,500 delegates.

The Congress of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics appoints the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R. This committee consists of the Council of the Union and the Council of Nationalities. The Council of the Union is formed from representatives from the constituent *Republics*, and consists of 371 members. The Council of Nationalities comprises representatives from the various *Autonomous States*. The Central Executive Committee has the power to postpone or hasten forward the meeting of the Congress of Soviets, which nominally meets once a year.

The Central Executive Committee itself, under ordinary circumstances, meets three times per year, and during the interval between meetings the supreme authority rests in the hands of its Presidium, of which there are twenty-one members.

The Council of People's Commissars of the



MAP SHOWING THE OUTSTANDING FEATURES IN THE ELECTRIFICATION OF THE U.S.S.R.



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U.S.S.R. is the executive and directing organ of the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R., and, in addition to its chairman and vice-chairman, it includes the commissars of the following Commissariats : Foreign Affairs, War and Marine, Distribution, Foreign Trade, Transport, Posts and Telegraphs, Workmen and Peasants' Inspection, Heavy Industries, Light Industries, Timber Industries, Labour, Finance, Agriculture, and State Planning. The Council of Labour and Defence is virtually the Council of People's Commissars sitting as an economic body.

The constituent republics have their own Congresses, Central Executive Committees, and Councils of People's Commissars elected and appointed in the same way as in the case of the U.S.S.R.

To the outside observer it would seem that such an intricate system of councils as that which the Soviet system represents would lead to interminable dissension and interstate quarrels. The degree of unity with which the republics and the autonomous States representing many nationalities and creeds appear to work together is astonishing, were it not for the fact that every action of the Congress of Soviets of the U.S.S.R. and the various District, Provincial and Republican Congresses of Soviets is dictated by the policy of the Communist Party Executive in Moscow. Since Lenin founded the Third International in March 1919, and chose Moscow for its headquarters, the Executive Committee, and the so-called Political Bureau and the General Secretariat of the Communist Party in Moscow, have been the real and autocratic rulers

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of the countries now constituting the U.S.S.R. The Georgian, Joseph Vissarionovitch Djughashveli, known to the world as Stalin, is the Secretary General of this body, and it is due to this fact that he is enabled to maintain his position, which is virtually that of dictator. He now holds no senior post in the Government of the U.S.S.R.

Stalin began his active life as a candidate for priesthood in the Russian Orthodox Church in the seminary at Tiflis. He there came under the influence of a group of Marxists, and, after six years' life in the seminary, at the age of twenty he was compelled to give up his training for the Church and he became an active member of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party. Although he was arrested and imprisoned many times, he almost invariably succeeded in escaping and attending the more important congresses of his Party. He was at the now famous conferences in Stockholm and London when the Bolsheviki Party was created. At the time of the Tsar's abdication in March 1917 he was an exile in a remote district of Siberia. This is the man who has succeeded in establishing himself as political leader in the U.S.S.R. After Lenin's departure from active politics, and even before his death, it was clear that Stalin was at loggerheads with Trotsky, Kamenev, Zinoviev, and other members of the ruling clique in Moscow. The quarrel developed until finally, on January 18th, 1928, the official organs of the Communist Party and the Soviet Government published a statement that Trotsky and his henchmen, including Smirnov, Serebrikov, Radek, Muratov and some twenty-five

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others, had been "deported from Moscow as the least measure possible to ensure safeguarding the interests of the proletarian State." It is a significant fact that the departure of Trotski and his associates, and the dismissal of Kamenev and Zinoviev from the high posts they occupied, resulted in the Jewish element of the Moscow Government becoming almost negligible.

The men whom Stalin has around him in the Political Bureau and the Party Secretariat are not representatives of the peasantry and workers of the U.S.S.R. in anything other than name. Kalinin, the figure-head of the Soviet Government, is a peasant, and can claim to have been an industrial worker, but the demagogues of the Moscow oligarchy are political workers who have spent the greater part of their lives as professional revolutionaries. The majority of them, in fact, have been in the inner circles of the Party since long before the revolution.

. . . . .

At elections such as that which we had witnessed, the right of franchise only belongs to certain citizens, and by no means to all. According to the original constitution of the R.S.F.S.R., the "right to elect for, and to be elected to, the Soviets, belongs to the following citizens of either sex, provided they have completed their eighteenth year before the day of the elections :

1. All who gain a living by productive or socially necessary labour, and are members of a Trade Union, namely :
  - (a) Workers and employees of all kinds engaged in industry, commerce and agriculture ;



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- (b) Peasants and Cossack agriculturists who do not employ hired labour ;
  - (c) Workers and employees in the Soviet Government institutions.
2. Soldiers of the Soviet Army and sailors of its Navy.
  3. Citizens belonging to the categories enumerated in paragraphs (1) and (2) who have lost their capacity for labour to any extent.

“ The right of electing or being elected does *not* belong to any persons belonging to the following categories :

1. Persons who employ hired labour for the purpose of profit.
2. Persons having a non-earned income such as may be derived from interest on capital, from revenues, from property, etc.
3. Private traders and commercial middlemen.
4. Servants of religious cults.
5. Employees and agents of the former police, gendarmerie, and secret service, as well as members of the former reigning family in Russia.
6. Persons who have been found insane, and the deaf and dumb.
7. Persons who have been convicted of crimes committed for selfish purposes, and staining the honour of their authors.”

. . . . .

I wandered back through the dripping pine-woods to my bungalow, understanding something of the electoral system of the U.S.S.R. One of the questions which perplexes many observers outside the Union is how a minority of considerably less than two per cent of the population of the country succeed in maintaining in power an “elected Government” almost entirely composed of Party men. It must be born in mind that the Communist Party is a closed and exclusive organization of which

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it is not easy to become a member. Its leaders have controlled its membership so that it is predominated by citizens drawn from the ranks of political agitators and workers in the industrial and city areas. In 1928 the total membership was 1,554,012, of which only 200,412 were peasants—in other words at that time less than 15 per cent of the Party membership represented approximately 80 per cent of the country's population. In the actual executive organs of the Party the share which the peasantry have in their councils is very much less than that indicated by the figures quoted. The method employed to get a vote favourable to the Communist Party in the election which we had seen apparently differs very little from the methods used in the Congress of Soviets itself in passing legislation.

During meetings of the Congress of the Soviets I have more than once watched the delegates arriving at the place of assembly in the Big Theatre in Moscow. It was distinctly illuminating to study their expressions. Among them there were many scores of semi-literate peasants who had never seen a great city before, and on whose minds everything they were shown made such a strong impression that I can imagine it only needed the band to strike up the "International" to induce them to give their support to the Presidium of the Congress, when its reports were presented, irrespective of whether they understood the matter or not.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE FIVE YEAR PLAN

LENIN, translating the Marxian Programme of Action into practice in the U.S.S.R., is reported as having said that "only when the country has been electrified, only when industry, agriculture and transport become placed on the basis of modern large-scale industry—then only will we be finally victorious." There is little doubt that Lenin cherished a hope, during the earlier years of the revolution, that the workers of certain West European countries would successfully overthrow their existing Governments and unite with the U.S.S.R., thus enabling the Soviet to utilize the industrial facilities which were already in existence in those countries. Before his untimely death, however, it was clear that any dreams which Lenin had of a world revolution were unlikely to mature, and it was equally apparent that, with as little delay as possible, the Soviet Government must, to quote Stalin's words, "undertake the transformation of the U.S.S.R. from an agrarian and weak country dependent upon the caprices of the capitalist countries into an industrial and powerful country quite independent of the caprices of world capitalism." Thus it came about that the Soviet Government embarked upon this first Five Year Plan on October 1st, 1928, and from that moment the

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intensity of the endeavours made by the Communist Party Executive to foment revolution in Western Europe definitely diminished.

The original Five Year Plan had for its objects :

1. To transform the country from a predominantly agrarian country into a country with a vastly improved standard of living, possessed of its own industries, and capable of producing all necessary commodities and supplies from native raw materials.
2. To reorganize agriculture on the basis of large mechanized State and collective farms, thus ensuring food supplies for its citizens and abolishing small private peasant farms, which Lenin had said " constituted a firmer basis for capitalism in Russia than for Communism."
3. To reorganize the distributive system of the country, making every possible use of the co-operatives as distributing agencies and eliminating middlemen.
4. To create in the U.S.S.R. the necessary technical and economic conditions to enable the country to defend itself to the utmost, and organize determined resistance to any attempt at military intervention.
5. To reorganize the country's transport system to enable it to cope with the vastly increased demands which the industrial programme would make upon it.
6. To raise the standard of education and eliminate illiteracy amongst workers and peasants.

In working out the first Five Year Plan, it was considered that primary importance should be attached to the development of the heavy industries. Lenin himself had been insistent on this point, saying, " The salvation of Russia lies not only in a good harvest—and not only in the good state of the light industries which provide the peasantry with consumable commodities—but we must have heavy industries. If we are not able to organize our heavy industries, then we, as a civilized State, let alone as a Socialist State, will perish."

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In making this statement Lenin apparently foresaw the necessity of the Government being in a position to provide the peasants with consumable commodities, and therefore it is a little difficult to understand how the Soviet Government came to make the mistake of crushing the village industries, and, before replacing them with State-controlled light industries, devoting their main attention to developing the heavy industries. They have already paid, and are paying, a heavy price for this error in policy. As will be shown later, the absence of consumable commodities has rendered it exceedingly difficult to induce the peasants to part with the products of agriculture, and thus the most serious situation which the Soviet Government has now to face has been created.

As early as 1920, Lenin called together a conference of specialists to assist in the preparation of the plans for the electrification of the U.S.S.R. This body, which came to be known as G.O.E.L.R.O. (State Commission for the Electrification of Russia), was the forerunner of the State Planning Commission (GOSPLAN) of the U.S.S.R. G.O.E.L.R.O. reported to the Council of Labour and Defence, which was also founded in 1920, and is, in fact, the Council of People's Commissars acting as an economic body. Gosplan, which is at the present time responsible for all State Planning work, also reports to the Council of Labour and Defence, and is purely an advisory body of experts which has neither executive nor administrative authority in the carrying out of the plans.

The planning of such a colossal and comprehensive

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undertaking as the Five Year Plan required considerable preparatory work, and from 1921 onwards the Supreme Economic Council and other bodies were engaged in making a very thorough survey of the national resources of the whole country, and the most advantageous means of their development. This work extended to sending many specialists abroad into Europe and America, to familiarize themselves there with every modern development which might be of use when the correct time came.

At the same time a system was introduced, in 1925, under which the sections of the Supreme Economic Councils of the various republics controlling industry were called upon to submit production estimates of the works, factories, mines, etc., for which they were responsible. These estimates, after being carefully checked, were sent forward to the Supreme Economic Council of the U.S.S.R.

Actual output figures were compared with the estimates as each year proceeded, and on the basis of these figures the development of the various industries was planned by the trusts and the corresponding departments of the Supreme Economic Council. The estimates themselves became known as the "control figures." It must be remembered, however, that the Supreme Economic Council concerned itself with the country's industrial economy only.

The State Planning Commission (Gosplan) was formed to collect and correlate the plans of the various sections of the Supreme Economic Council

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of the U.S.S.R., and its corresponding organizations in the seven republics of the Union, and fit them into a complete and comprehensive plan involving every aspect of the country's national economy, including industry, agriculture, transport, distribution, finance, and the provision of every kind of educational, social and welfare service. Gosplan thus became a permanent and most important department in the Soviet Government.

The procedure now employed by Gosplan in carrying out its great task commences with the issuing of general instructions to all concerned as to how the "control figures" must be compiled. Following these instructions, the various Commissariats of the constituent republics prepare their estimates and submit them to the State Planning organizations of the republics concerned, who, after having approved them, send them forward to the Gosplan of the U.S.S.R. in Moscow. Here they are carefully checked, examined, and, if necessary, amended, by a staff of over seven hundred specialists, including nearly two hundred men of high academic attainment, working under the direction of the Presidium of Gosplan.

After scrutiny by Gosplan, the "control figures" for the whole of the U.S.S.R. are passed on to the Council of Labour and Defence and the Soviet of People's Commissars for approval, and from them, for final approval, to the Central Executive Committee of the Congress of Soviets of the U.S.S.R. After this final approval, they become the basis of the whole economic activity of the various Commissariats concerned for the ensuing year.

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In determining the programme of carrying out the economic development of the U.S.S.R., five years was decided upon as the time required to complete the first section of the Plan, and further developments will in the future be planned in five-year periods. Shortly after this first section of the Plan was commenced, the political leaders in Moscow decided to abandon the practice of making the Soviet financial year date from October 1st, as this caused considerable inconvenience in their dealings with foreign concerns, and thus the Soviet Government reverted to the old practice of dating its financial year from January 1st. In order to make this adjustment, a "short" financial year was introduced in 1930—i.e. October 1st to December 31st. Simultaneously a propaganda campaign was embarked upon, calling all citizens to help in fulfilling the Five Year Plan in four years (actually four years and three months).

When the first Five Year Plan, or, as the Russians usually refer to it, the first "Piatiletka," was announced, its full significance was not, at first, appreciated by the workers and peasants. An industrial loan was floated, and mass meetings of workers were constrained to listen to long appeals, delivered with parrot-like precision by Party agitators, calling upon them to invest two weeks' or a month's earnings in the new loan. The great majority of the workers in State organizations found themselves carried by popular vote into complying with the appeal, and had the satisfaction of seeing their names published, in wall gazettes and newspapers, as generous subscribers to the scheme for developing



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the country's national economy, and as examples of good citizenship. The peasants were frankly and openly sceptical. The majority of the old intelligentsia with whom I came into contact about this time was inclined to view the possibility of the Plan proving successful with pessimistic misgivings.

In these days it was indeed refreshing to meet men like the late Michael Silvestrovitch Michailov and Ivan Pavlovitch Djoukov—two of the Party men responsible for the development of the heavy engineering industries. It was due to the unbounded energy and enthusiasm of men such as these that the Soviet Government have succeeded, to the extent they have done, with their Industrial Development schemes. Sparing neither themselves nor others, Party leaders of this type inspired enthusiasm, and led their technical staffs and their work-people into exerting almost superhuman efforts to make the Plan a success. In the industries to which they have directed their attentions astonishing results and developments have been achieved. Unfortunately not every industry, or even every section of the heavy industries, had such men. Weaker men became nominal chiefs only influenced by the local party political organizations and Workers' Committees to such an extent that chaos all too frequently resulted. In such organizations, the technical expert, drawn from the ranks of the old intelligentsia, was invariably regarded with suspicion, which rendered enthusiastic co-operation almost impossible even when these experts were genuinely anxious to do their utmost to make the Plan a success.

## THE FIVE YEAR PLAN

Perhaps the greatest leader of all the industrial chiefs with whom it has been my fortune to be associated is Alexander Vasilovitch Winter—the engineer who was in charge of the Shatura Power Scheme, who built Dnieperstroï and the Dnieper-combinat, and who is now about to build two great dams on the Volga, and one on the Kama. Engineer Winter has recently been appointed a Deputy Commissar and placed in charge of the whole of the Electrical Power Supply and Development work in the U.S.S.R. He has the distinction of being the one man of Cabinet rank in the Soviet Government who is not actually a member of the Communist Party. This great organizer is idolized by every man of the many tens of thousands of workers who have served under him during the last ten years. Never have I worked with a man of sterner manner, or one more exacting in his demands on the time and energy of his staff, and yet it is a significant fact that, at Shatura and at Dnieperstroï, almost every one of the many thousands of workers employed felt that they knew Alexander Vasilovitch personally, and were prepared and proud to attempt the apparently impossible at his bidding. Some time ago I asked my small son what he intended to be when he grew up ; his reply was that he hoped and wanted to be a man like Mr. Winter. My answer to this unexpected reply was that, if he developed to be so fine a man as he had chosen for his idol, his country would be justifiably proud of him.

Let us now briefly review the colossal task which the Soviet Government and a comparatively small

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group of intensely keen men such as those to whom reference has been made above set themselves in 1928.

The generation and distribution of electric power has from the outset been regarded as the basis for the Soviet Government's extensive plans of industrial development. The general plan for the electrification of the U.S.S.R. contemplates the provision of a high voltage network extending from the Western frontier to the Far East. In the preliminary draft of the general plan of electrification, the following stages for the construction of the network are foreseen :

During the first Five Year Plan, some thirty-nine power stations were to be built, thus raising the total generating capacity of the U.S.S.R. from 1.7 million kilowatts in 1928 to 5.5 million kilowatts in 1933. These power stations were to be built in those districts where immediate industrial developments called for electrical energy, but in every instance it was to be kept in mind that they are ultimately to be connected into the general network. Leningrad district ; Moscow district ; the apatite-mining district on the Kola Peninsula ; the textile manufacturing district around Ivanovo Vosnensk ; Nijni Novgorod (Gorki) district ; Dnieperstroi, and the coal and iron districts of the Western Ukraine ; the coal and iron districts of Central Ukraine ; Harkov district ; Transcaucasia ; the oil districts of Baku and Grosni ; the industrial city of the lower Volga—Stalingrad ; the industrial areas of the Urals at Kizel, Perm, Cheliabinsk, Sverdlovsk, and Magnitostroi itself ; the new industrial

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areas in Central Siberia on the Tom River, and Kuznetzstroi ; and finally Tashkent, and the Central Asian district around it, were selected for intensified electrical development during the Five Year Plan. Sections of the network were to be built, increasing the total length of overhead transmission lines from approximately 2,000 miles in 1928 to 8,300 miles in 1933. The actual amount of power distributed was to be increased from 5,160 million kilowatt hours in 1928 to twenty-two thousand million kilowatt hours in 1933. It will be shown in a later chapter that this section of the plan, despite the magnitude of the task which it represents, was, in general, satisfactorily achieved.

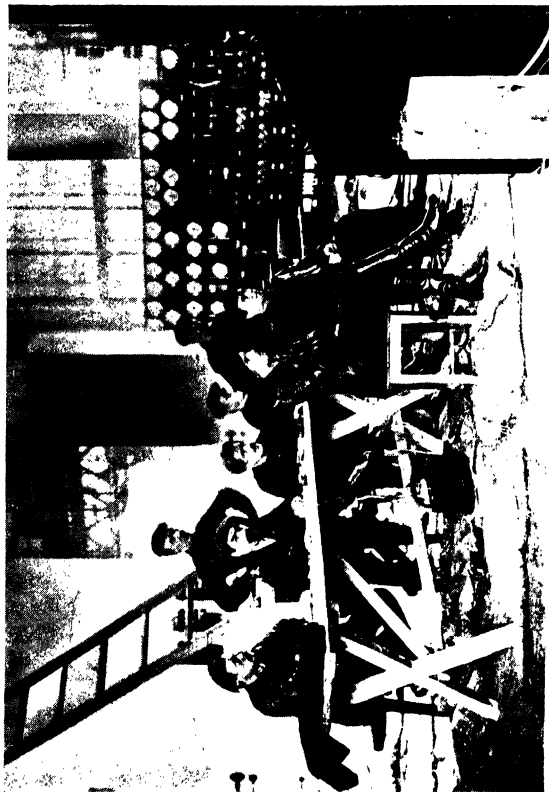
The second Five Year Plan (1933-1937) provides for the completion of a network inter-connecting all the district power stations in the European part of the U.S.S.R. An arterial transmission line will inter-connect Leningrad, Moscow, Donetz Basin, Azov Sea, North Caucasus. Arterial branches from this line will run, (1) Moscow, Nijni Novgorod (Gorki), Stalingrad, and thence back to Donetz Basin, completing the ring ; (2) Donetz Basin, Dnieperstroi, Krivoi Rog, and Western Ukraine ; (3) Leningrad, Svir River, Petrozavodsk, Murmansk ; and (4) North Caucasus, Transcaucasia and Baku.

This vast network will be connected to that of the Ural Mountains, and it is the intention of the Soviet authorities to carry the lines across Siberia as far as the Kuznetz district, supplying power to the Siberian main line, which it is proposed ultimately to electrify.

This main Siberian transmission line will have branches connecting it with the Karaganda coal district and the new industrial districts now being opened up in Kasakstan. The scheme provides for several hydro-electric stations on the rivers flowing into the U.S.S.R. from the mountains of Sian Kiang, the Pamirs and Afghanistan, which developments will be used for irrigating the cotton-growing areas and for power generation. The Siberian transmission line will ultimately be continued to the Far East, and the second Five Year Plan provides for preliminary work on the Angara hydro-electric scheme. This scheme is probably the most ambitious the Soviet have in view. The Angara river, regulated by the water reserves in Lake Baikal, is capable of delivering some ten million kilowatts. This vast amount of hydro-electric power lies in the centre of what is now believed to be one of the richest areas in the world.

The possibilities of such developments in this area are not realized by most of those who review the Soviet Government's industrial activities. The importance of the fact that the Soviet Government are in a position to develop a vast and almost self-contained industrial area in the heart of Asia cannot be over-exaggerated.

In the steel and iron industries, the first Five Year Plan provided for extending a number of existing works in the Ukraine, including those at Dnieperpetrovsk, Eniakeeva, Stalin (Hughsovka), Makeevka, Taganrog, Mariupol, Krivoi Rog and Krematorskaia, where fifteen new blast furnaces were to be put into blow. This figure includes new



#### THE COMPLETION OF SHATURA POWER HOUSE

This photograph was taken at the moment that power from the new power house was first switched on to Moscow. The engineer sitting second from the left is Engineer A. V. Winter



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blast furnaces at the Dnieper Combine, where an entirely new industrial area was to be developed for utilizing the hydro-electric power from Dnieperstroi.

The Dnieper Combine may be taken as a typical example in European Russia of several similar schemes which figure in the future plans of the Soviet Government, particularly in relation to the development of Siberia.

These combines are to be located at points where there is a large source of cheap power in the vicinity of mineral wealth and good agricultural land, and consequently where self-supporting industrial communities may be established.

At Dnieperstroi nine 84,000 horse-power turbines were to be installed, which in wet years will have an output of 4,410 million kilowatt hours (2,500 million kilowatt hours in a dry year). The bulk of this power will be utilized in the Dnieper Combine, where works are being built to produce 1,250,000 tons of steel, 80,000 tons of ferro manganese, 20,000 tons of ferro silicon, 4,000 tons of ferro chromium, 1,600 tons of ferro tungsten, and 20,000 tons of aluminium. The subsidiary works of the Combine will produce over 2,600,000 tons of slag cement, thirty million bricks, 200,000 tons of lime, and 150,000 tons of fire bricks annually.

In the Ural Mountains, ten new blast furnaces were provided for in the Plan, including those at Magnitostroi, where a new steel works was to be built, which will have an output of four and a half million tons of steel per annum. Magnitostroi necessitated the building of a city to house 180,000



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people. At Kuznetzstroi, in Russian Mongolia, another great steel plant was to be given precedence over all other work. This plant, which incidentally is now going into partial operation, was designed ultimately to produce 1,500,000 tons of steel per annum.

Under the first Five Year Plan, the annual output of pig iron was to be increased from 3.3 million tons to ten million tons in 1933, and that of steel products from 4.2 million tons to 10.4 million tons in 1933.

In the chemical industry colossal new chemical fertilizer plants were planned at Beresniki in the Western Urals, and at Bobriki near Moscow. The new fertilizer plants were to have an output of over three million tons per annum. The output of sulphuric acid was to be increased by large new works at Voskresensk, near Moscow, and elsewhere, from 208,100 tons to 1,450,000 tons per annum.

Corresponding activities were planned in the works producing boilers, turbines, electrical generators and plant, locomotives, motor vehicles of all kinds, Diesel engines, etc. Great tractor-building factories were to be completed at Stalingrad, Harkov, Leningrad (Poutilov) and Cheliabinsk, with a total output of over 200,000 tractors per annum. Several large agricultural machinery works were to be built and put into operation.

In the sphere of agriculture, the Soviet Government intended to collectivize as much as possible of the arable land consistent with being enabled to supply the great quantities of agricultural machinery and fertilizer necessary to make collective farming successful. Large State farms and so-called

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“grain factories” were to be organized ; twelve million acres being allocated for this purpose.

In the matter of distribution of commodities, the authors of the Plan set themselves the task of destroying the private trader and the middleman, and distributing through the co-operatives. The difficulties which this change involved were immense. The somewhat natural desire to hoard commodities appears to be common to all sections of the populace and had to be countered with a rigid system of rationing and of food and commodity cards. As the Plan developed, it became necessary to supplement the work of the co-operatives, as distributors, by instituting a system of so-called “closed distribution centres” in factories and State institutions. These centres purchased bulk supplies of perishable foods, and so-called “deficit” commodities, and made themselves responsible for ensuring rapid distribution to the worker-consumers.

The fourth-named object of the Five Year Plan is not one upon which I am able to enlarge. Whilst selecting their power equipment for certain war factories the Soviet authorities have sought technical advice from me from time to time, but I would consider it an obvious breach of their confidence to refer here, or elsewhere, to any facts which may have incidentally come to my knowledge regarding the scope and the trend of their preparation for defence.

Railway transport was to be sparingly developed during the period 1928–1933, because the Soviet had no wish to find itself with a vast network of unremunerative lines. They preferred to develop their existing lines, electrifying some of them, and

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then turn their attention to improving roads and road lorry transport. The mileage of railway system was to be increased from 76,837 to 90,000 kilometres. It was anticipated that the freight traffic on existing lines would increase from 151 million tons to 240 million tons per annum.

The number of workers employed in industry was to increase from 3,441,000 to 4,600,000 in 1933, whilst the total number of employed workers was to be increased to 15,760,000 (this figure compared with approximately eight million in pre-war days mentioned in Chapter III). The number of graduate engineers employed in industry was to be nearly doubled—reaching a figure of 44,000.

In dealing with education, those responsible for the Plan set themselves two great tasks. The first was to “wipe out illiteracy” in a people who prior to 1914 were 73 per cent illiterate, who are spread over an area extending more than half way round the world, who belong to some two hundred different nationalities and tribes, and who speak in over sixty different tongues. This task in itself was a vast undertaking, but in addition the Soviet authorities were faced with the even more pressing need of educating the large technical staffs and bodies of skilled workers which were required to put the first Five Year Plan into successful operation.

To accomplish this latter object to the best advantage, technical education for industry was not placed under the Commissariat of Education but under the Supreme Economic Council. The man chosen to undertake this great task was D. A. Petrovski, about whom a leading British

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educationalist, Dr. Mouat Jones, has written : "Petrovski has incomparably the greatest task of any technical educationalist in history, and brings to it equal abilities. One has not met a man of greater administrative grip or capacity."

The old system of polytechnics was abandoned for a system of monotecnics, under which each monotecnical institution is closely connected with the works or factories manufacturing the products in which its students specialize. The obvious advantage of this system to the Soviet Government is that it enables them to train men for specialized industries rapidly. The technical training institutions were divided into :

1. Technical high schools, which have courses of university standard.
2. Technicians, which are day-course technical schools for students ranging in age from fifteen to eighteen years, but not of university standard. The students in these schools work a "sandwich course," spending a considerable amount of their time in works or factories.
3. Workers' faculty schools, which are designed to give a secondary education to adult worker-students between the ages of eighteen and thirty years. Students in the workers' faculty schools may qualify for the technical high schools.
4. Factory secondary schools for giving a general education for workers ; and school factories for training workers in their tasks of actual production.

The numbers of educational institutions of these kinds which were foreseen under the first Five Year Plan are shown in the following table.

Industry (under the Supreme Economic Council) . . . . .	Technical High Schools	Technicians	Workers' Faculties
Rural Economy . . . . .	188	663	321
Commerce . . . . .	68	352	—
Medicine . . . . .	28	117	—
Pedagogy and Art . . . . .	21	129	—
	77	194	—

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The actual numbers of students it was planned should be trained in these schools were :

	1930-31	1931-32	1932-33
Technical High Schools . . . . .	108,146	173,341	237,876
Technicians . . . . .	110,624	183,452	254,452
Workers' Faculties . . . . .	139,555	205,766	270,489

The annual expenditure involved in this huge educational scheme was estimated at approximately five and a half million pounds in 1930-31, increasing to over thirteen million pounds in 1932-33. (It may be noted that the State Budget for 1933 shows a figure of 2,153,038,000 roubles as the estimated expenditure on education during the year.)

It must be held in mind that the fundamental idea of the first, and, for that matter the second, Five Year Plan, is to lay the foundation for a future Communist State ; and from the outset it was recognized that an immediate marked improvement in the standard of living of the Russian people as a whole could not be expected. Those who are responsible for the Plans are looking a long way ahead.

It may well be asked what kind of genius sits in that unpretentious building in the old Berjevoi, (Stock Exchange) Square in Moscow, and plans a completely new civilization for the inhabitants of over one-sixth of the world's surface. Nominally this task is entrusted to Comrade Kubishev, but in actual fact the Executive Chief of the State Planning Commission is its Vice-President, Mr. V. I. Mejlauk. On several occasions I have been privileged to meet this modestly spoken and brilliant

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engineer, whose training has made him a most suitable choice for the extremely important post which he occupies. He knows America and the countries of Western Europe well, and speaks many languages. Almost annually he makes it his business to visit Western Europe, and sometimes America, in order to discuss the problems which interest him with the economists and politicians of capitalist States. On one occasion, Mr. Mejlauk was telling me how his department was planning the whole life of the nation for many years ahead—including their education and the provision of proper facilities for utilizing their leisure hours. He emphasized the necessity for physical development and culture. I had just read Aldous Huxley's book, *Brave New World*, and I almost shuddered to think where Mr. Mejlauk's plan might lead the Russian people. Until that moment the interest of building large new power stations, and getting them into operation, had held my whole attention, and I had not paused to consider the position of future Soviet citizens living an entirely planned existence with an outlook on life based on Marxian materialism. I made a comment to this effect, whereupon one of my compatriots asked Mr. Mejlauk whether religion did not enter into his plans. "This is my religion," he replied, indicating the coloured development maps on the walls of the ante-room to his private office.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE FIVE YEAR PLAN IN INDUSTRY

THE CARRYING into execution of the industrial sections of the Five Year Plan was entrusted to the Supreme Economic Council. This body was reorganized early in 1932, and its functions were divided among three separate Commissariats, i.e. the Commissariat of Heavy Industries, the Commissariat of Light Industries, and the Commissariat of Wood and Timber Industries. Each Commissariat is in itself subdivided into sections, each under a deputy Commissar, certain of whom rank as members of the Council of People's Commissars. The Commissariat of Heavy Industries is, for instance, subdivided into no less than fourteen sections, including sections dealing with power generation and transmission (Glavenergo), manufacturing of power plant and electrical equipment (Glavenergoprom), fuel supplies (Glavtop), heavy metal industries (Glavmetal), chemical industries (Glav-chim), etc., etc. This Commissariat also has a special section devoted to controlling scientific and industrial research, under the immediate supervision of Professor N. I. Bucharin.

The carrying out of the Five Year Plan has necessitated the employment of some thousands of foreign specialists, and the negotiating of technical assistance agreements with foreign firms. This side of the Commissariat's activities are in the hands of

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a special foreign section, under the control of men who have had many years' experience in West European and American business dealings.

The sections of the Commissariat control the various State combines and trusts into whose hands the actual works and factories are entrusted. For instance, the section devoted to the manufacturing of power plant and electrical equipment (Glavenergoprom) controls (1) The All Union Electro-Technical Combine (V.E.O.), which has thirteen works in Leningrad, nine in Moscow, a works in Harkov, which claims to be the largest electrical manufacturing works in Europe, and is now building a works in the Ural Mountains, which will employ approximately sixty thousand operatives. At the present moment the V.E.O. Combine employs over a hundred thousand people, and produces every kind of electric power plant, including turbines, generators, transformers, switch-gear, motors, furnaces, cables, lamps, etc., etc. (2) The Boiler-Turbine Combine (K.T.O.), which has large works in Leningrad, a works in South Russia at Taganrog, and is now building a factory in the Ural district at Ufa. This combine now employs approximately twenty thousand hands, and produces boilers, steam and water turbines, condensing plant, pumps, etc. (3) The All Union Weak Current Electrical Combine, with works in Leningrad, Moscow and other parts of Russia, and producing all kinds of telegraph and telephone apparatus, radio equipment, instruments, meters, etc.

The managers of the respective factories report to the general managers of the combines, who



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report directly and personally to the Deputy Commissar. The combines and trusts no longer have boards of directors, as they had previously—i.e. until 1931. Their management is vested in a general manager and his assistants. It was held that the existence of boards of directors involved unnecessary wastage of time and money.

As a second instance, the section dealing with power generation and transmission (Glavenergo) may be cited. This section controls all electric supply, and the carrying into execution of new electrical generating and transmitting schemes. It has the power supply undertakings of the whole Union divided into district trusts—Moscow district (Mosenergo), Leningrad district (Lenenergo), Donetz district (Donenergo), and so forth.

Many of the larger developments, as for instance Dnieperstroï and the new hydro-electric station in the Svir River (Svirstroï), retain a certain amount of individuality, and report directly to the Deputy Commissar instead of to the district trusts. This, however, is the exception and not the rule, and such an arrangement is usually made in deference to men of powerful character who are at the head of the particular organizations.

The above two instances have been dealt with in some detail because they are typical of the organization of industry and of industrial services by the Commissariat of Heavy Industries.

The oil-producing district of Baku presents a striking example of industrial development work which has already gone far towards completion, and is giving satisfactory results.

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The Azerbaijanian authorities began to get the wells of the Baku oil-fields back into production some years before the Five Year Plan was announced, and in 1925 were already providing one of the chief sources of revenue of the Soviet Union. The central authorities in Moscow naturally made heavy demands on their profits, and it is not surprising to find that long before the Plan came into being the Azerbaijanian Government embarked on an extensive reconstruction programme in order to utilize the profits of the oil industry for the benefit of their own republic, rather than hand them over to Moscow. They opened up new oil-fields, putting some 460 drilling rigs to work drilling new wells. The old antiquated oil refineries of the small Tartar proprietors in Black Town were swept away. In their place a new residential district for work-people was laid out, and many hundreds of single-storey houses, complete with baths, electric light, gas cookers and other modern improvements, were built.

Every house had its own little garden—in a district where nothing green grew in pre-revolutionary days. On the hill above the city a workers' model town sprang into existence. These new housing arrangements for the workers were indeed an extraordinary contrast to the miserable one-roomed tenements in the yards of the refineries in which they had lived previously. A new hospital on the heights above Baku now constitutes one of the city's most imposing buildings. An electric railway (the first in U.S.S.R.) was built for carrying the workers from Baku to the oil-well districts eight

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miles away at Sabunchi. This railway operates in conjunction with an extensive new tramway system.

Modern refineries were constructed with cracking and gas recovery plants. One of these refineries has a capacity for dealing with 300,000 tons of crude oil per annum. A new ten-inch pipe line was laid across the six-hundred-mile stretch of country between Baku and Batoum. A new water supply now brings good water from the Caucasus Mountains, ninety miles away, and the water-carrier, with his disease-carrying sheepskins slung over donkeys' backs, has ceased to be a familiar sight in the city. The good work commenced by the Baku authorities in 1925 has continued under the first Five Year Plan, and some 3,000,000 tons of oil products found their way by pipe line and rail to the port of Batoum in 1931. The work-people of Baku are justly proud of the great progress they have made during the last ten years ; they have built themselves a fine city, with modernized oil plants, model dwellings, electric railways, and other modern facilities, and have made provision for their proper recreation ; but they have one legitimate complaint, their supplies of food and consumable commodities have been insufficient.

In January 1932 my duties took me to another great industrial centre, Cheliabinsk, on the eastern side of the Ural Mountains. This old town has sprung into a great industrial centre in a very few years. At the time of my visit the tractor works and the ferrous alloy works, which are to employ some tens of thousands of work-people, were not yet completed, but I was given an opportunity of

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inspecting them. I was shown the new industrial town, which had been laid out, and during my five days' stay I lived in one of the three-roomed flats that had been built to house workers. As a guest at the workers' club of the Cheliabinsk Power Plant, I came into contact with a thoroughly keen group of young Communists, and I was much struck with their enthusiasm and their appreciation of the great task before them. As I stood silently watching them whilst the "International" was played at the end of the evening, I felt it almost incredible that one of the reasons I had made the thousand-mile journey from Moscow here was to allay discontent amongst foreign workers, who had become incensed at the inadequate and poor food supplies available. As I left Cheliabinsk, I paid a visit to the special station where agents were taking on workers for Magnitostroi—that colossal new steel plant being built in the Urals where already 180,000 work-people were finding employment on a steppe where, two years previously, the herds of the nomad Kherghiz had grazed undisturbed. I spent some hours among these people. They were housed in a barracks, in which the atmosphere was appalling. No windows were open, for the outside temperature was 30 degrees below zero. The majority of these unfortunate work-seekers were kulaks who had been deprived of their land and their property, and had been expelled from their villages. In many cases their families accompanied them. Their plight reminded me of the Polish refugees in Moscow in 1915. The older ones were obviously too terrified to be persuaded to talk, and would say very

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little of their feelings and their experiences. Two children came to ask for assistance, and my companion, who was a Communist, and I heard a pitiful tale of destroyed village life, broken homes, and the search for employment, which had become the lot of these peasants.

What has been said of the oil areas of Baku and the industrial district of Cheliabinsk applies equally to the Donetz Basin coal and iron district. In this area enormous sums of money have been spent on new mining and steel works plant. According to figures quoted to me by Mr. Bojanof, of the Central State Coal Commission, in July 1932, there are now 430,000 men employed on coal-getting, but he added that the Government was experiencing great difficulty, due to men deserting the mines and going to the large constructional undertakings, such as Magnitostroi and the Moscow Underground Railways. In the coal areas of the Donetz Basin the mines have been re-equipped with the most up-to-date coal-getting and coal-handling plant, new surface gear and coal-cleaning plant has been installed, new and model dwellings have been provided for the workers, but the authorities have not been able to keep a full complement of miners at their work, because their stomachs were half empty, and their wages could not purchase for them the bare necessities of life.

In the summer and autumn of 1932 two visits were paid to the U.S.S.R. by groups of directors of the Metropolitan Vickers Electrical Co. Ltd. These visits did more than anything to make me appreciate what a convincing and inspiring show

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can be put up by the Soviet authorities when showing visitors their country. The achievements of the Soviet authorities in the field of industrial development during the four years 1929-1932 have without question been astonishing. We visited Harkov and were shown Turbostroi—the large factory built by the All Union Electro-Technical Combine (V.E.O.) for building turbines and heavy electrical plant. We lunched in a workers' canteen with 16,000 workers. Our food was given us in a small separate room, but it was claimed to be the meal provided for senior staff employees. It was certainly wholesome and there was plenty of it. During our visit, certain departments of the new factory were commencing work, and we saw valuable precision machine tools, destined for the works' tool-room, at work in an atmosphere laden with cement dust and grit. One felt this was a typical case of rushing machines into service for political reasons, when a sober policy would have been better. Up to the present date, this huge plant has not commenced real production. We visited the Harkov Tractor Plant, and saw the mass production of tractors. Without any doubt these works were at that time maintaining the output reported in the Soviet newspapers of the day as having been accomplished. In the evening we were entertained to a banquet at the Harkov country club. Nothing could have been more ideal in a workers' colony than the conditions which we saw here. The facilities for healthy recreation were definitely excellent.

On the next day we journeyed to Dnieperstroi. Here we were at one of the real show-places of the

U.S.S.R. The economic necessity for having undertaken so vast a task as that of harnessing the Dnieper rapids for generating power, and incidentally making this section of the great water-way navigable, is questioned by many authorities. However, the fact remains that the Soviet Government decided to proceed with the scheme—possibly their decision was savoured with a desire to appease the Nationalist element amongst the Ukrainians, but it must also be borne in mind that the developing of large self-contained combines such as that at Dnieperstoi is definitely a part of the Soviet Government's policy. The task of building Dnieperstoi and the Dnieper Combine was entrusted to the builder of Shatura Power Station—Mr. Winter. Assisted by American consultants and a Russian staff, he accomplished the feat of damming the Dnieper and starting up the Dnieperstoi Power Station in the short time of four years. Twenty-six thousand work-people were employed on this great work.

On the occasion of our visit, Mr. Winter himself—who had just been promoted to the post of Chief of the Power Generation and Transmission Section of the Commissariat of Heavy Industries—devoted the whole day to showing us round the new industrial town, its works, the dam, and the power house. He drove us out to the famous Zaporoshi Tsech Island—the one-time stronghold of the Cossacks, on which no woman even set foot for four hundred years, and whence the Cossacks wrote their challenging and insolent letter to the Turkish Sultan. This island, under Mr. Winter's hand, had become a large



A GLIMPSE IN OLD TIFLIS



NEW HOUSING ACCOMMODATION FOR WORKERS IN  
THE BAKU DISTRICT





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vegetable garden and orchard for feeding his work-people at Dnieperstroi. We drove through miles and miles of ripening grain and good root crops to the model village built on the right bank of the river, where the constructional engineers were housed in most attractive little villas, each with its own garden. The fertile soil and good climate gave these gardens the appearance of being many years older than in truth they were. We inspected the great power house, and walked along temporary wooden scaffolding on to the dam itself, over which the surplus water of the river is now constrained to take a hundred-foot plunge.

No one can help but be profoundly impressed at the magnitude of the work, and at the intense enthusiasm with which it was being carried out. We were seeing one of the bright spots of the Five Year Plan.

Leaving Dnieperstroi at 4.30 a.m., we had to wait half an hour at the railway station of Zaporosji. The station was packed with peasants and work-people who had come to Dnieperstroi seeking employment. Many of them were very obviously destitute, and did not hesitate to ask for assistance. That station and its crowd of hungry and disgruntled work-seekers was a terrible contrast to what we had seen the previous day a few miles away.

On our return from Dnieperstroi we visited the research laboratories of the All Union Electro-Technical Combine in Moscow, where 1,500 research workers are employed on electrical research problems, utilizing the most modern and up-to-date

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equipment. We were shown the Electrozavod, where in three years the manufacture of electric lamps was put on to a sound technical and economic basis without the assistance of foreign firms. This one works had an output of 42,000,000 lamps in 1932. Lamps, however, are only one of its activities. It produces the complete electrical equipment, including self-starters, magnetos, etc., for 500 motor vehicles per day. Transformers, electric furnaces, projectors and many similar products are also manufactured in these works. In December 1932 it had 23,000 workers on its pay-roll and was still developing. The question immediately arose as to where these workers came from. The answer was that they were peasants from the villages. We watched a girl winding self-starter armatures—a difficult task, calling for accuracy and great dexterity. She was winding an armature, complete, in something under two hundred seconds. I asked her how long she had been thus employed, and her reply was that eight weeks ago she was a village peasant. She had doubtless been known by her Christian name two months earlier in her village ; now she was a cog in the great machine turning out detail No. 5,120, and herself numbered with a five-digit number. The Communist engineer who accompanied us noticed my conversation, and he thought it necessary to emphasize the fact that although they had adopted the Ford system, nevertheless the workers were “ free citizens of the U.S.S.R. and not the down-trodden workers of Detroit and the capitalist countries.” As this girl’s wages were definitely lower than those of her opposite number in a British

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mass production motor-car plant, and their purchasing power very much lower than in Great Britain, I frankly did not see the point of his remark, but refrained from taking the conversation further, otherwise I might have mentioned other disadvantages under which this girl worked, which happily do not exist in Great Britain.

In Leningrad we were shown the Leningrad Metal Works, where the Metropolitan Vickers Company's engineers had been acting as advisers on the technical problems associated with steam-turbine construction. Visits were also made to the Electrosila Electrical Machinery Works, where electrical machinery, including the largest water power generators ever built in Europe, were in course of assembly. The State Telephone Manufacturing Works and the "Svetlan" Radio Valve Works were also visited. Output figures showed that results were being obtained in the two last named factories which were comparable with the best West European works. In the telephone works we were particularly interested to find that the workshops were decorated with flowering plants. Palms and fuchsia plants were everywhere in evidence. The superintendents assured us that since this "green workshop" movement had been commenced the production of the shops into which it had been introduced had increased approximately 15 per cent. The urge to increase production and reduce factory costs was as keen in this factory as in any factory I have known under capitalist direction.

During these tours we were naturally shown industrial developments at their best. Unfortunately

time did not permit of our visiting the Ural districts to see the immense works in progress in that area where coal, mineral and potash deposits are responsible for great industrial activities. We therefore could not see Magnitogorsk with its 180,000 workers. Cheliabinsk and the new industrial districts around Sverdlovsk were too far away to permit a visit being made to them. Kuznetzstroi, and the great developments taking place in the valley of the Tom River, with its vast coal and mineral deposits, were obviously outside the range of the short tours which time permitted. We would have liked to have made the journey from Semipolatinsk to Alma Ata on the new Turk-Sib Railway, and seen the developments in the cotton and fruit-growing districts of Central Asia, where we knew great progress was being made. Lack of time prevented our seeing more, and, like many other visitors to the U.S.S.R., my chiefs had to be satisfied with hearing the reports of officials and others who were conversant with conditions in the outlying districts. In the summer of 1932 the reports and the figures in connection with the plan gave every reason for optimism.

The following table will perhaps permit a clearer understanding of the magnitude of the industrial development work which the first Five Year Plan involved.

The authorities responsible for this development scheme have not found it an easy matter to promote and maintain the enthusiasm necessary to successfully carrying it through. They have found it necessary to devise many novel expedients to urge forward and encourage the eighteen million citizens

# INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION OF THE SOVIET UNION IN COMPARISON WITH PRODUCTION IN 1913

## Five Year Plan

	1913	1926-7	1928-9	1929-30	1932
Coal (million tons)	28.9	32.1	39.9	45.7	62.9
Oil "	9.3	10.3	13.7	17.1	21.3
Iron Ore "	9.2	4.8	8.0	10.2	12.2
Pig Iron "	4.2	2.9	4.0	4.96	6.2
Steel "	4.2	3.5	4.7	5.55	5.9
Cars (units)	—	—	1,110	8,700	24,065
Tractors "	—	726	3,228	9,400	50,000
General Machine Building (million roubles)	307.0\$	—	793.9\$	1,300.0\$	5,252.0
Electro-Technical Machine Building (million roubles)	45.0	134.9	260.0	585.7	1,218.3
Agricultural Machine Building (million roubles)	67.0*	97.0*	210.0*	312.2*	890.4
Electric Power Output (million units)	2.575†	4.098	6.208	7.714	13.100
Total Production of Industry (million roubles)	8.430*	8.760*	13.100*	16.300*	34.300
Total of Wage Earners (million persons)	11.200	10.990	12.394	14.269	22.804
Unemployment (million persons)	—†	1.350	1.700	.700	—

\* In pre-war prices.

† 1916.

‡ No figures available.

§ In prices of 1926.

Note.—Figures for 1932 are quoted from "Summary of the Fulfilment of The First Five Year Plan for the development of the National Economy of the U.S.S.R."

now reported as "employed" in the development of their country.

From time to time industrial loans have been raised, and these issues are invariably accompanied by a campaign planned to "whip up" enthusiasm. In 1927 there was the Industrial Loan, followed by the Five-Year Plan in Four Loan in 1930. In 1931 came the Third and Decisive Year Loan, followed by the Completion and Victory Loan in the last year of the Plan. The names given to these loans are themselves eloquent of the trend of the platform propaganda which accompanied their issue.

The authorities having reached the decision that some form of competition to foster production was necessary, introduced what is known as "Socialistic Competition." Under this system individuals, groups of workers, and frequently whole works, challenge other individuals, groups or works engaged on similar work, to beat specified production figures, which are usually placed higher than the Plan "control figures." The challenges are quite commonly published in the newspapers, and may be extended to several factories. Should the challenger win, the victory is in most cases made the subject of much publicity, and not infrequently some award is given by the authorities. Only too often these challenges result in expensive foreign equipment being forced beyond its capacity, with deleterious results.

Another expedient is that of permitting groups of workers, and sometimes whole works, to declare that they do not agree that the estimated "control

## THE FIVE YEAR PLAN IN INDUSTRY

figures " for their own particular enterprise represents the maximum production obtainable, and of encouraging them to put forward their own improved output figures in what they call a " Counter Plan." This practice has resulted in many irregularities by careless and sometimes unscrupulous seekers for " honours." Production has been forced at the expense of quality, and not infrequently returns have been presented which, having the appearance of recording great achievements, are in actual fact misleading almost to the point of being false. The practice of putting forward Counter Plans has now been officially discouraged.

Still another method of instilling enthusiasm is that of forming brigades of " shock workers." Individuals and groups of workers are given the title of " shock workers " (Udarniki) if they show extraordinary zeal and ability. Not infrequently political influences assist in the decision as to whether individuals are sufficiently good to be awarded the title of " shock worker " or otherwise. " Shock workers " sport a badge, and enjoy numerous privileges, including special ration cards, free passes on the tramway system, and so forth. It may be of interest to record the fact that a number of the Metropolitan Vickers Company's employees, including two of those who figured in the " Moscow Trial," have been elected Udarniki for exceptional services in the fulfilment of the first Five Year Plan.

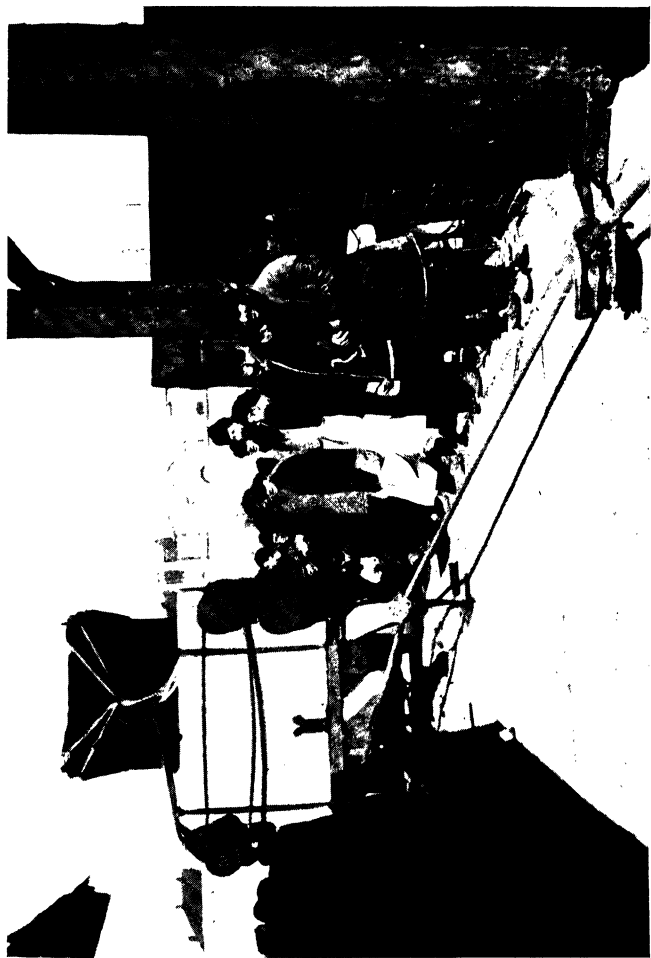
The authorities are constantly presenting the case for increased production to the workers. Lectures are given and cinematograph films are shown portraying the collapse of industry in America



and Western Europe, under what they refer to as the "Crisis in the Capitalist World." Soviet industry is shown forging ahead, led by heroic workers and peasants. The slogan "Catch up and overtake the capitalist countries" was on every political agitator's lips in 1929 and 1930. Since then pictorial diagrams have become the most favoured means of showing the comparison between the alleged successes of the industrial Plan in the U.S.S.R. and the decline of production under crisis conditions in the "crumbling capitalist" countries. "With them—with us" is now the cry popular amongst propagandists. Even Stalin, in his review of the Five Year Plan in January 1933, did not refrain from adopting this line of argument.

Early in the revolution the wall gazette was started. In every works and in all State departments the wall gazette is a prominent activity carried on by the local Party organization. The gazette itself is a large sheet posted on the wall in some prominent place, on to which local items of news, personal items, caricatures and criticisms are pasted. The general trend of such items as appear on these scurrilous publications is usually directed against members of the old intelligentsia and others whose bearing has not met with the approval of the frequently rather juvenile members of the local Communist "cell."

An innovation which was introduced in 1931 is the "black pay office." This is a black kiosk placed near the entrance to the works, where all workers who have been guilty of drunkenness or absence from work are paid—being forced to wait in a



HAULING A HEAVY TRANSFORMER INTO A MOSCOW SUB-STATION.

The men shown are typical Moscow workers



## THE FIVE YEAR PLAN IN INDUSTRY

queue where they become the objects of attention and derision from their co-workers.

Another innovation introduced about the same time, and not differing widely from the wall gazette, is the "black board," on which all who fail to maintain production figures, or whose personal conduct is lacking in some respect, will probably find their names appearing. In other large works where departmental competition is encouraged, large effigies of a dragon are placed in a prominent place in departments which fail to fulfil the planned production, whilst an elephant or other recognized symbol of success is suspended in departments which have over-fulfilled the Plan.

Self-criticism was another of the expedients which the Moscow authorities introduced into all State organizations in 1929. Under the cloak of self-criticism informers were induced to come forward and indicate the shortcomings and deficiencies which were naturally to be found during a period of intense development such as this. As a general rule such criticisms were published in newspapers and on wall gazettes, and were far from being *self-criticisms*, but were usually direct personal criticisms by juniors and Communist Party enthusiasts of the actions and work of their chiefs and in particular of members of the old intelligentsia.

The part played by young Communist critics and informers in most State organizations deserves every condemnation. The "purging meetings," which have been a characteristic of all institutions and organizations in U.S.S.R. during recent years, show these young people at their worst. At these meetings,

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which are usually presided over by commissioners appointed by the Central Purging Commission, all employees are subjected to a public and detailed investigation into their past histories and their present actions and political leanings. I have known many instances where men and women have been loyally and conscientiously working for the new régime, but who have found themselves summarily dismissed after a purging commission's investigation because it has transpired that in pre-war days they have been associated in one way or another with religious activities, the old gendarmerie, or with other so-called capitalist organizations which are constantly the butt of venomous attacks from the Communists.

Many of these steps to stimulate production may appear ludicrous to those who do not know the U.S.S.R., but apparently amongst the class of labour which is now being recruited from the villages into the industrial towns they have sufficient effect to justify their being resorted to.

Undoubtedly the most unsatisfactory characteristic of the Russian worker is his inborn tendency to roam. Even in pre-war days it was not infrequent to find men had roamed all over the country, working at various trades, before settling down. The poor food conditions which now exist in many parts of the U.S.S.R. have tended only to increase the migratory habits of the workers. This has now become such a serious problem that the Soviet Government has had to introduce special legislation to deal with it. Before these measures were introduced, the astonishingly rapid labour turnover

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was adversely affecting production in all parts of the country.

Although this new legislation would apparently enable the authorities virtually to conscript the workers in industry, and force them to remain employed in any definite works or factory, it would appear, however, that the Soviet Government have not even yet realized the ill effects of a constantly changing management. During a period of rapid development such as that through which the industries of the U.S.S.R. have recently passed, it is natural to expect rapid changes in organization and personnel, but one would imagine that the advantages of ensuring that the men in key positions remain permanently employed are too obvious to need emphasizing. This fact does not, however, appear to be fully appreciated, and management changes in the majority of industrial enterprises take place with astonishing rapidity.

As an example I might cite the case of the Electrosila Works in Leningrad. This works employed some 12,000 operatives in 1932, although this number has dropped considerably during recent months. The works has definitely fallen behind its programme. This failure to attain plan production is doubtless due to rapid changes in management and policy. The factory originally belonged to a large German concern prior to its being nationalized in 1918. In 1922 it adopted the designs of another German concern, and after four changes in management, during which it dropped its associations with both German concerns, it became indirectly associated with another

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European firm. In 1928 a further change in management occurred and a great American company contracted to render technical assistance to this and other factories, and thus American designs were introduced. Russian engineers were sent to America, just as they had previously been sent to Germany, to study American manufacturing methods. In 1931 the Metropolitan Vickers Electrical Co. Ltd. entered into a technical assistance agreement with the combine owning this works. Another change of management occurred and technical assistance was thus brought in from Great Britain. In 1931 a further change in management was made, and at the present time few, if any, foreign specialists are working at Electrosila Works. On one occasion I commented on this particular case to the Deputy Commissar of Heavy Industries then responsible, and he professed to believe that the policy was to "select the best features from the designs and production methods of the leading firms in Europe and America." I am afraid that Russian industry at the present time is not sufficiently established to enable it to achieve success in carrying through a daring policy of this kind.

In the course of the last seven years I have known many instances where specialists have been sent abroad by State manufacturing concerns to study designs and methods ; but these specialists have been promptly transferred to other spheres of industry on their return to the U.S.S.R.

Amongst the organizers of industry, the fear of taking responsibility now constitutes a serious

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problem. The punishment almost invariably meted out to those who commit an error of judgment, which may be interpreted as sabotage or counter-revolution, may partially explain the attitude of extreme caution which characterizes the actions of most responsible officials in Soviet organizations at the present time.

A few of the more senior officials may be found to give the impression that they can make quick decisions, but, generally speaking, it has been my experience that even decisions taken by those who occupy the positions of Deputy Commissars are as a general rule subject to confirmation by higher bodies.

The majority of responsible officials are called upon to work long hours, and the lives of political and executive chiefs appear to be one endless round of councils, commissions, conferences and committees.

Experienced technical men are also almost invariably expected to take their part as lecturers in the technical colleges and schools, and serve on technical commissions. In most instances these men willingly undertake such additional duties on account of the welcome increase they bring to their moderate incomes. The average Government official in Moscow works from 9.30 or 10 a.m. until 9 or 10 p.m. at night, with a short break for dinner at about 5 in the afternoon. About noon a light lunch, consisting of sandwiches and tea, is usually eaten in the offices almost without interruption of work.

In the years 1929-1930 and 1931 I frequently



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visited senior officials in the departments of Heavy Industries and Foreign Trade, and in those days I invariably found them full of enthusiasm and keenness. The effects of the New Economic Policy were still visible, and these men were confident of their ultimate success. In 1932 and 1933 the position clearly changed. Difficulties were beginning to make themselves felt and their existence was realized.

In 1931 and 1932 the Moscow chiefs of industry were "discovering America." When one called upon them, they reeled off long lists of successes on the "industrial front" with parrot-like precision. Not infrequently I heard high-placed officials boasting of what they apparently genuinely believed to be new and original developments, when in actual fact some technical process, which had long been developed and regarded as standard practice in Great Britain and America, had been mastered in the U.S.S.R. There is little doubt that many of the political chiefs are quite commonly misled by the reports of their juniors. I remember well hearing the Deputy Commissar of Heavy Industries extolling the splendid work of a certain large Leningrad works in producing steam turbines. This work was held up to the whole of the U.S.S.R. as an example. It had fulfilled and over-fulfilled its plan. It had created a world's record. Its organizers were decorated with the order of Lenin. Sober critics and "those who knew" nodded their heads and wondered how long the deception would last—wondered, too, who were being deceived and who were merely

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deceiving themselves. Six months later the real position began to become apparent. A whole year followed, and the works was still finishing off the turbines which it had claimed to have completed months previously. Doubtless the same machines figured for a second time in the following year's output returns. When I have listened to Government officials reporting upon the output of those works and factories for which they are responsible, I often wonder how much they know of the real position.

In January 1933 a Deputy Commissar told me that the Kuznetzstroi Rail mill was working satisfactorily. He referred me to a newspaper report of its start and spoke glibly of the production from this mill in thousands of tons per month. My colleague, a visitor to the U.S.S.R., gained the impression that all was well at Kuznetzstroi and the production figures named were already being obtained. At that time I knew that the number of rails produced per shift could be counted on two men's fingers, and I knew that the mill was actually shut down for three weeks, due to an explosion at the furnaces. I quietly told our informant of this. He assured me I was misinformed. I feel convinced he was himself unaware of the real position which, however, I happened to know because my own company's engineers were in charge of erecting and running the main driving motors and had reported having been "held up" in their work due to the trouble at the furnaces.

The general impression which I have been able

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to form of the industrial aspects of the Five Year Plan is that much has been commenced, and in the lighter industries, where the Plan has not been so ambitious, much highly successful work has been done, and considerable results are being obtained, but in the heavy industries the Plan is a very long way from even approaching fulfilment, and in this sphere the authorities are only now finding the difficulties of production. Their position is made exceedingly difficult owing to the absence of a sufficient number of experienced technical men for controlling factories and works, and to constant interference from the political authorities. The technical and executive men available are worked too hard. Such successes as the Soviet authorities have achieved in carrying out their Plan have been attained at a cost which it remains to be seen whether or not the nation can stand. The people of the U.S.S.R. as a whole commenced the great task the Plan involves with considerable enthusiasm, although they knew it would necessitate great sacrifices of their own comforts for many years to enable them to pay for it. In those earlier days of the Plan they little imagined that the workers of the steel districts in the Ukraine—old Russia's granary—would in 1933 walk to their work in steel mills equipped with modern equipment, passing, as they walked, the recently deserted dwellings of those who had died of hunger, or who had fled in order to avoid famine and the epidemics which follow famine.

## CHAPTER XV

# AGRICULTURE AND AGRARIAN PROBLEMS

IN CONSIDERING the New Economic Policy it has already been shown how the peasants reacted to the new lease of life which was given to them in 1921. They felt themselves once more their own masters, and it was not until the so-called "scissors" policy of the Soviet Government began to be felt that they realized they were once more being bled to provide the Government with capital for their industrial reconstruction schemes. It has already been explained that the term "scissors" was applied to the state of affairs which had developed during 1926-1927, and which had resulted in the peasant having to provide approximately four times as much grain and agricultural produce to pay for the manufactured commodities which he required from the town as he had done in pre-war days.

Discontent amongst the peasants was a natural result of such a disproportion in values, and consequently during 1927 they failed to produce the quantities of grain expected from them, and firmly refused to part with their hoarded stocks until definite steps were taken by the Government to alter the situation. The Government's first move, early in 1928, was to send to the villages the commodities which the peasants needed, in order to

tempt them to sell, but the result of this move was disappointing. A levy in kind was then made, and enforced by agents of the Government sent into the country districts as tax collectors. Not infrequently grain was seized by violence, troops being used for the purpose. The hostile reception which these agents received in the villages has not been denied by the Soviet Government, and, in fact, the play, *Bread*, now being produced at the Moscow Art Theatre, clearly depicts the intense distrust and hatred with which the grain-collecting officials were met by the village communities. The richer peasants and the kulaks definitely organized a passive-resistance campaign. Grain was hidden, and, when the spring came, failures to sow crops occurred. The position became definitely threatening, but the Government met it by raising the poor and ne'er-do-well peasants against their richer brethren and the so-called kulaks. The collectivization policy was put into action as rapidly as possible, and Stalin himself urged his followers to "liquidate the kulaks" and merge their land and property into the collective farms. The net result was that the wealthy peasants threw up their hands in the struggle, and, after killing their live-stock and secretly selling all that they were able to sell of their property, joined the collective farms. One result of this action on the part of the peasants was that, during the autumn of 1929, meat and farm products became available in great quantities in the cities. At first it was not clear to most observers what was occurring, but, early in November 1929, I had cause to travel into the country districts, and

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it was very soon obvious that the wealthy peasants knew then what was likely to follow. They regarded the future with the utmost pessimism, foreseeing clearly the difficulties which would occur in establishing the collective farms, particularly in the northern districts. Obviously the Government also realized that things were going too far and that the spring sowings were in danger, and thus it was that, on March 2nd, 1930, Stalin, who had himself urged the liquidation of the kulaks, suddenly called a halt and accused his agents in the villages of excessive zeal in enforcing the Party policy. According to him they had departed from the Party's instructions, and he gave new orders that in future no pressure must be employed to force the peasants into collective farms. Following this hypocritical disclaiming of his own instructions, Stalin's words "bending the Party line," became a by-word amongst Moscow's intelligentsia. Simultaneously with this sudden interest in the welfare of the richer peasants another consideration was shown to the peasants in general, in the form of the announcement of certain religious freedom being granted. A somewhat natural result of this attempt to induce the peasants to sow their crops was that many of them expressed their intention of leaving the collective farms and re-establishing themselves as individual cultivators. In order to counter this tendency the Government hastened forward the establishment of Tractor Maintenance Stations (M.T.S.) in all the agricultural districts, for giving assistance and advice to collective farmers. When autumn came, however, the grain-collection

methods of 1929 were again resorted to, and throughout 1931 the merciless war on the kulaks and the wealthy peasants was carried on. "The kulaks must be liquidated as a class," was again the cry of every Party leader from Stalin downwards. Those of us whose duties made it necessary for us to travel about the U.S.S.R. saw something of what the "liquidation of the kulaks" involved. In the first place, the authorities responsible for putting the policy into execution were not content to restrict their efforts to the real kulaks, but included the bulk of the better and wealthier peasants. Let it be explained that the real kulak is the type of peasant exploiter who is to be found in almost every village—usually an arrogant wealthy peasant who owns the local flour-mill and store, and becomes deservedly unpopular on account of the usurious methods he employs in his dealings with his poorer neighbours. One could not but feel that many of the genuine kulaks to some extent earned the fate meted out to them, but, with them, literally millions of hard-working honest peasants have suffered undeserved confiscation of their property and deportation. The fate of these unfortunate peasants was heart-rending to witness. Every railway junction lying between the agricultural districts and the timber forests of the north was crowded with peasants, who had been expelled from their homes, hopelessly travelling they knew not where. The sufferings and privations of these unfortunate victims of Stalin's instructions when they reached the timber camps have been sufficiently described in recently published literature. Doubtless many of

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the stories in circulation are grossly exaggerated, but, whatever the conditions are in the timber camps, the principle of wrenching hard-working peasants from their homes, confiscating their property, and compelling them to labour in the Far North under appalling conditions, cannot be reconciled with the declarations which spokesmen of the Soviet Union have not infrequently made when pleading the case of the Soviet before the outside world. More often than not the children of these unfortunate peasants became separated from their parents, and the difficulties which the Soviet Government had in dealing with the "wild children" of the civil-war period have again presented themselves. In 1932, homeless children—the result of the Soviet Government's policy of liquidating the kulaks and wealthy peasants—again appeared on the streets of Moscow.

Under the Five Year Plan, the Soviet Government allocated an area of approximately twelve million acres which were to be utilized for the establishment of 150 large State farms. Naturally this colossal area was not put under cultivation before the end of the first Five Year Plan, although recent returns show that in 1933 the State estimates that it will be farming thirteen million acres. The Giant Farm and the Verblud Farm, in the North Caucasus, have been held before the Russian populace and the outside world as examples of successful State farming on a colossal scale. The Giant Farm, in 1932, had 120,000 acres under wheat cultivation, but the yield per acre was reported as being disappointing.



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At no great distance from these State farms, the German "Drusag" concession, under the able management of Dr. Detlov, and the Seattle Commune, which is a co-operative farm run by a group of men of many nationalities who have come to the U.S.S.R. from Seattle, U.S.A., have provided splendid examples of what might be accomplished by large-scale farms in these fertile districts.

With the impending failure to get results which it is reasonable to expect in many of the collective farms during the coming year, it becomes increasingly important that the Soviet Government should get satisfactory results from their State farms in order to secure sufficient supplies of grain to feed their industrial workers in the cities. The quantities of grain produced by the individual peasants cannot be counted upon for this purpose.

Late in the autumn of 1932, the Soviet Government issued a decree setting forth the agricultural yield which it relied on receiving in 1933 from each district. The collective farms and private peasants were told that any amount of agricultural produce which they could raise over and above the quota demanded by the Government could be sold by them freely in the open market. As the Government quotas were set reasonably low, this scheme appeared to many to present a solution to the difficult position into which the Government has unquestionably fallen in its relationship with the peasants. Somewhat naturally there are many peasants who strongly distrust the good intentions of the Government in making this decree, and it remains to be seen, during the autumn of 1933, whether the

sceptical attitude of the peasants was right or not. Personally I think the Government made their decree in perfectly good faith, and that it was in fact a measure deserving of much greater notice than has up to now been given to it. Difficulties present themselves in administering the new decree, because, for obvious reasons, the permission to sell in the open market can only be granted when a whole district has fulfilled its quota, and cannot be granted to each individual peasant or collective farm.

During the four years and three months ending on December 31st, 1932, the Soviet authorities succeeded in uniting some sixty per cent of the peasant households (covering seventy per cent of the total cultivated area of the U.S.S.R.) into 200,000 collective farms. At the same time the Government established more than 5,000 large State farms, and 2,448 Tractor Maintenance stations for rendering tractor repair and maintenance service to the farms. On paper this would appear to be the great achievement which Stalin claimed it to be in his review of the Five Year Plan, but, on February 15th, 1933, some thousands of delegates of the First All Union Congress of Collective Farm Shock Brigade Workers met in Moscow and allowed themselves to indulge in the self-criticism which the Soviet authorities encourage. Their self-criticism did much to confirm the opinions of those who foretold the difficulties which would be encountered in enforcing the collectivization policy. It appeared that those who had urged the peasants into joining the collective farms had thought that, once the

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peasants had been organized into collective groups, the farms would run themselves without organized and strong-handed supervision. They had failed to take into consideration the fact that peasants who entered the collectives felt themselves only part owners in a semi-State organized concern, and did not realize that the State and the community expected them to devote the same amount of energy to the tilling of the land as they had done as private owners. The peasants of the old days commenced work with the rising of the sun, and returned to their homes for sleep at dusk. The collective farmer, however, has his very much shorter hours regulated by a gong or a piece of old rail hung from a post on the village green. Mechanized methods may ultimately enable reductions in working hours to be made without reducing the agricultural production per acre, but such methods are not yet sufficiently established and organized in the U.S.S.R. to allow the Russian peasant to enjoy an eight-hour working day.

One hesitates to imagine what will be the fate of the peasants on these farms, and in the villages, if the grain quantities for 1933 cannot be produced. Last autumn, sixteen villages in the Ukraine failed to produce the grain required from them, and their failure was attributed by the authorities to deliberate sabotage. A decree was published in the local papers, announcing that all grain hoarded in the offending villages was to be confiscated, the co-operative stores in the villages were to be closed, and no State distributing authority was to arrange to send food to them—in other words,

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sixteen villages were condemned to starve or secretly flee from their homes. When I was told of this decree I frankly did not believe it, but, when I saw for myself, I had to express my apologies to the friend who first told me of it for having doubted his statement.

Speaking at Nijni Novgorod in June 1933, Kalinin himself is reported as having said : " There are collective farms in the Ukraine and the North Caucasus where the supply of bread does not suffice, or suffices with difficulty." He interpreted this, however, as a righteous judgment upon the collective farms where work had not proceeded energetically.

One good reason for the present partial failure of the collective farms lies in the fact that, the wealthier and more experienced peasants having been deported from their villages, the management of the collective farms fell into the hands of the bedniaki and young Party men with comparatively little farming experience. The bedniaki are the poor peasants, which class includes all those who, in pre-revolutionary times, had proved themselves incapable of making a success of their own small plots. The Government Department of Agriculture has of course sent agricultural specialists and instructors to assist in the organization of the collective farms, but in many instances these men have been prepared to give instructions in methods of agriculture which Russia is not yet ready to adopt, due to the shortage of agricultural machinery and fertilizers.

Obviously one of the chief advantages of collective

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farming lies in the use of mechanized methods of land tillage, gathering crops and thrashing, and although the conditions obtaining in the southern districts are ideal for such methods those to be found in the northern areas, where the country is everywhere broken by marsh, rock and forest, and consequently requires working with horses and hand ploughs, do not present the same advantage when worked collectively, even assuming that the experience of the older peasants were available.

Although the Government professes to be endeavouring to press the collectivization policy further, it is abundantly clear that what has already been done has resulted in such chaos in the villages that it is extremely difficult to understand how even such measures as the sending of specially trained Party political workers on to the collective farms is going to avert disaster in many districts.

On January 13th, 1933, it was announced that political workers would be sent to strengthen the collective farm organizations, and the Central Committee of the Party has published a statement that on June 16th, 1933, 10,139 such workers were already doing good political work on the collective farms.

The outlook in the agricultural areas is not good. The better-class and experienced peasants have been banished from the villages. Their herds have been to a large extent destroyed. The collective farms have fallen into the hands of political organizers and the poorer peasants who have in the past proved themselves unsuccessful farmers. Discontent is rife everywhere in the villages, except

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amongst the young people. The crop in 1933 may prove a bad failure in many districts, although the Government is taking every possible step to ensure sufficient grain production on the State farms to enable it to feed the industrial areas and the towns during the winter 1933-1934. It may be assumed from Kalinin's words already quoted that the peasants on the mismanaged collective farms will be left to their fate. Time alone will show what that fate may be, but the horrors of the famine of 1920-1921 may easily find repetition.

Before I left Moscow on April 19th, 1933, I had a discussion with an old peasant from a village many miles north of Moscow. I have known this old man for a considerable number of years, and he told me that a commission from the neighbouring town was "proving" his village. Two successful hard-working peasants, who were certainly not kulaks, and both of whom I knew, had been taken from their houses at two o'clock in the morning and deported to an unknown compulsory labour district without any charge having been named against them. Their land had been confiscated and their families were left destitute. The majority of his village was collectivized, but the collective farm organization had refused to include him. He had been a more prosperous peasant, and had employed agricultural labour, therefore he was defranchised and not allowed to take part in the collective farm. Offering me his hand, he said, "So you see I am a deportee like you are" (this was the day after the Moscow Trial concluded), "but," he continued, "there is a difference—you go home to order and plenty; for

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us—our only way out is closing the window and opening the stove ; in that way one goes out without the pains of death by starvation.” I shook his hand and begged him to look on things a little more brightly. Even then I had not appreciated the full significance of the threatening situation which had developed in many of the villages.

## CHAPTER XVI

### MOSCOW, 1911-1933

VIEWED in the evening from the Vorovoi hills on its western boundary, pre-revolutionary Moscow presented a picture more Eastern than European in its effect. It was from this viewpoint that I first saw Moscow on October 25th, 1911.

Enough snow had already fallen to give the scene that wintry effect which the very name of Moscow then suggested, for in those days Moscow was associated in the minds of most Europeans with Napoleon's tragic experiences there, in the throes of a Russian winter. From these hills the more modern and central part of the city was only visible in the distance, but the smokeless and clear frosty atmosphere permitted every detail to be observed. The rays of the setting sun caught the golden and multi-coloured cupolas of its churches. The gilded dome of the Cathedral of the Saviour, with its fourteen hundredweight of pure gold, stood out as a central landmark backed by the towers and white-walled palaces of the Kremlin. To the south, the three-hundred-feet tower of the Simionov monastery stood sentinel, whilst in the near foreground the vista of low two-storey buildings, with their coloured roofs and their tree-shaded courtyards, was broken by the picturesque turreted walls and Byzantine towers of the New Maiden Convent.



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The impression which the scene left on my mind was that of a semi-Asiatic city. It was the evening hour of prayer, and the resonant tolling of the great bells in the belfries of its many scores of fine churches completed the impression, and went far towards creating that peculiar fascination which pre-war Moscow had for all who stayed long within the sound of its bells.

Moscow has not a very ancient history. The earliest authenticated references to it date from the building of a stockade round the dwelling-place of one Prince Dologorukov in 1156. That first wooden stockade stood where the massive forty-foot walls of the Kremlin now stand. During the centuries that followed the building of Prince Dologorukov's stockade Moscow was razed to the ground by invading armies of Tartars and Poles on several occasions before it suffered almost complete destruction in the historic fire which broke out in many parts of the city on the night on which Napoleon entered it in 1812.

The hundred years that followed Napoleon's defeat saw a new Moscow arise from the ashes of the former city, but, despite its having been built in comparatively modern times, pre-revolutionary Moscow was far from being a modern city. The people of St. Petersburg referred to it as the "Big Village," and it had, in fact, many provincial characteristics which rendered it difficult for the Moscovites to defend themselves against this ironical reflection on their city.

Geographically, as well as politically, the Kremlin is the hub around which Moscow is centred. On one

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side of the Kremlin lies the walled inner city or so-called Kitai Gorod. At about half a mile distant from the walls of Kitai Gorod, a boulevard encircles the town, marking the line of ancient Moscow's first line of defences. Some four hundred yards further from the centre there is a second boulevard encircling the city. This outer boulevard was originally Moscow's outer earthwork rampart, and one section of it is still known as the Earth Wall. The main streets of the city radiate from the Kitai Gorod, so that the map of Moscow presents the appearance of the wheel-shaped web of a spider. Many of its streets are crooked, and there is no indication of the city having been planned. It is characteristic of the older part of Moscow that one of its streets in the business area should actually be called the Street of Crooked Bends.

During the closing months of the first Five Year Plan I again stood on the Vorovoi hills and this time I viewed the capital of the U.S.S.R.

Great changes had occurred. The vista of low green- and red-roofed two-storey buildings had given place to a modern city of six- and eight-storey blocks of workers' flats. The woods along the riverbanks lying at the foot of the hill on which I stood had become a part of Moscow's eight-hundred-acre Park of Culture and Rest, where tens of thousands of its citizens may be found every summer evening. Many hundreds of rowing-boats gave a new life to the river itself.

The great gilded dome of the Cathedral of the Saviour and the sentinel-like tower of the Simionov monastery had gone. The dark-walled telephone

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building, which previously stood alone and high on the sky-line, was now eclipsed by the new thirteen-storey staff headquarters of the O.G.P.U.

In accordance with a decree of the Soviet, no sound came from the belfries. Many of the fine old mellowed bells had been lowered from their hangings and gone to provide metal to assist in the fulfilment of the Five Year Plan. Much of the charm of the old semi-Eastern city had gone, but its place was taken by the intense interest which the new city fosters in the minds of all who realize something of the vast change which is being wrought within its boundaries.

Had I been able to get a bird's eye view of the eastern side of Moscow, the change would have been infinitely more marked. Here, until five years ago, there existed an extensive open space of some fifteen hundred acres, where the Annanhovski forest was destroyed by a tornado at the beginning of the present century. This common was used as a training-ground for troops during the Great War, but in the last five years a complete industrial town has been built upon it by the All Union Electro-Technical Combine. The new works in this industrial area will ultimately employ some 60,000 operatives, for all of whom adequate and good accommodation is being built in large six-storey apartment houses. A central bread bakery, schools, technical schools, factory kitchens and communal dining-rooms, workers' clubs, crèches and a theatre are already completed. The Government's new central electrical research laboratory, employing 1,500 research workers, has been working for two



THE PALACES IN THE MOSCOW KREMLIN



AN APARTMENT HOUSE IN MOSCOW  
Typical of those now being built throughout the city



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years, and a large experimental works is nearing completion. This self-contained electrical town within Moscow's boundaries has been laid out in accordance with the most modern ideas in town planning. A thermo-electric power station, situated near the middle of the area, will distribute heat, power and light to the whole community. This development is characteristic of what is being done on all sides of the new city, which those in authority in the Kremlin look forward to making the proud and up-to-date capital of a prosperous U.S.S.R.

Moscow's population in 1914 was approximately 1,780,000. The great majority of the middle-class population then lived in apartment houses within easy reach of the centre of the city, whilst the wealthy merchants had their single-storeyed *osobniaks* in the area lying between the inner and the outer boulevards, to which reference has already been made. Outside the outer boulevard the working people and poorer classes lived in two-storey wooden dwellings under conditions far from sanitary. Near the centre of the city the Russian insurance companies had invested a part of their large funds in building imposing blocks of luxury flats, which were occupied for the most part by the wealthier professional classes and foreigners.

When Lenin and his associates moved the seat of government of the U.S.S.R. from Petrograd to Moscow in March 1918, many of these fine residential buildings became Government offices. The present Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the headquarters of the O.G.P.U., and the administrative

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offices of the State railways, were all originally blocks of residential flats belonging to the large insurance companies. The leading hotels became communal residences for senior State officials. One hotel became the Ministry of Agriculture.

The Ministries of Trade, Education, Heavy Industries, Light Industries and many others occupied modern blocks of offices erected immediately prior to the war. The great riding-school became a garage for the cars of the Soviet chiefs.

During the early years of the revolution—i.e. prior to 1925—very little new building was done in Moscow, and consequently the city became alarmingly overcrowded. Statistics show that only 8 per cent of the population then occupied more than one room. Approximately 50 per cent were living two in a room, over 30 per cent found themselves five in a room, and 85,000 people were housed under conditions where there were more than eight persons per room. Since 1925 large sums have been expended in building modern housing accommodation on the outskirts of the city, but, although some twenty million pounds has been spent in a single year on this development, the increase in Moscow's total population has been so rapid that the accommodation built has been hardly sufficient to house the new population ; and consequently the hopeless overcrowding of the older part of the town continues.

In 1932 an exhibition was held in Moscow at which the plans for the further development of the city, until it was capable of properly housing nearly

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five million inhabitants, were shown. In making their plans the Moscow authorities have sought the advice of many world-renowned experts on town planning, and proper attention has been given to having ample "green" wooded areas and open spaces for rest and recreation. It is ultimately intended that the city shall be encircled by a forest belt, from half to one kilometre in width, at a distance of about six miles from its centre. Outside this green belt, suburban residential districts will be developed.

Reference has already been made to the development of central heating stations. These installations, which are run in conjunction with the electric power stations, present an exceedingly interesting solution to a great problem, and are being watched with the greatest possible interest by engineers from many parts of Europe and America. This development is of the utmost importance, since it ensures a great economy in fuel and an appreciable saving in labour. The central district of Moscow, including the State Opera House and many Government offices, has now been heated for several winters with hot water circulated from the Moscow central electric power station, situated about one mile distant. The system would appear to be highly satisfactory even under Russian winter conditions. Cleanliness and diminution of smoke, which are claimed as advantages of the system, are not so marked in Moscow as they would be in Great Britain, because the method of burning fuel in Moscow, even in pre-war days, ensured such complete combustion that very little



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smoke or dirt escaped from domestic chimneys.

Without exception, every building in Moscow to-day, and in its immediate suburbs, is provided with electric light. A gas supply is also available in the central districts of the city, and most modern blocks of flats are equipped with gas cookers and water heaters.

When I returned to Moscow in 1924, I had gathered from British newspaper reports that I should find the tramway system completely disorganized, but I found nothing of the sort. During the ten years 1923-1933 the observations which I have been able to make regarding the working of the tramway system indicate that the rolling stock and equipment are being reasonably well maintained, and are being used to an extent which in Great Britain would be regarded as more than their maximum capacity. Despite the fact that the number of tramcars operating in the streets of Moscow at the present time is considerably more than double the number which the municipal tramway authorities had available in 1914, the overcrowding on Moscow's tramcars must be seen to be believed. An engineer friend of mine—an Irishman—recently jocularly remarked that he had seen a Moscow tramcar “full up,” adding that “he knew it was full, because when one man pushed his way on to the rear entry step, two people fell off the front exit platform!” Electric railways leading out to Moscow's suburbs are being rapidly developed, and work was commenced in 1932 on an underground railway system, to which the Moscow officials have given the name “Metropolitan.”

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In 1914, Moscow possessed one asphalted street and one street laid with squared setts. The whole of the remainder of the city's streets were paved with rounded cobbles laid on sand—a poor road, necessitating constant supervision and repair. During recent years the main streets throughout the city, and many of the side streets and main roads out into the suburbs, have been laid with asphalt.

The Moscow cabs, with their blue-robed peasant drivers, many hundreds of which gave colour and character to the streets of pre-war Moscow, have now almost disappeared. Last summer I talked with the owner-driver of one of the last remaining pneumatic-tyred cabs. He related to me a pitiable story of the taxation and confiscation methods with which the Soviet authorities had successfully forced these last representatives of private transport enterprise from the streets of Moscow. Motor transport is taking their place. The great motor manufacturing plant at Gorki (Nijni Novgorod), the Amo motor-lorry plant in Moscow, and the heavy lorry works in Yaroslav, are pouring their products into the city with astonishing rapidity.

The changes which have been described in Moscow's external appearance have had their counterpart in the general appearance and bearing of its citizens. The long-coated, bearded merchants are no longer seen throwing *rumkas* of vodka down their throats, and eating cucumbers in the Slovanski Bazaar. That and other retreats of the successful traders of the inner city are now communal dining-rooms for leather-coated and enthusiastic young

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workers in the Government offices which occupy the warehouses of the old traders.

Colour has gone from Moscow streets. Particularly in the winter-time one cannot but be adversely impressed by the drab and unprosperous appearance of the people. The effect of the demands made on the whole populace by the Five Year Plan is only too obvious. No money has been spent in the U.S.S.R. for many years on expensive clothing.

The majority of the first-class restaurants of pre-war Moscow are now noisy communal dining-rooms. The exceptions are the Bolshoi Moskovski, the Metropole, the National and the Savoy restaurants, which have been re-opened for catering to the needs of foreigners and tourists. These restaurants are comparatively little patronized by citizens of the U.S.S.R., for the simple reason that should they be seen spending their money in such expensive establishments, they would risk finding themselves singled out for attentions by O.G.P.U. investigators, who might ask awkward questions.

Visitors to pre-war Moscow were invariably impressed by the extraordinary number of beggars who were to be seen soliciting alms in the city. In those days, begging was acknowledged as a legitimate "profession," and the churches taught that the giving of alms was a religious duty. On more than one occasion I have asked beggars to change me a three- or a five-rouble note, and they have readily done so. Many begged for money to spend on drink, and would openly show how much they were short of the necessary amount to purchase

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a bottle of vodka. Others begged to raise funds for building churches in distant villages. These were genuine priests and peasants, who not infrequently showed an architect's drawing of the church they wished to build. It was surprising how rapidly money could be raised in this way amongst the trading community of Moscow. Under Soviet rule the beggars have gone. Very occasionally one is approached for assistance by peasants who have found themselves deported from their villages, or by suffering members of Moscow's old intelligentsia, but these subjects are not the "professional" beggars of the old days.

Although the beggars have gone and the homeless children of the civil war have been "liquidated," nevertheless during the winter of 1932-1933 hordes of homeless children once again appeared in Moscow, constituting a living reproach to the Government for its inhuman treatment of the wealthy peasants during recent years.

Reference has been made to the Cathedral of the Saviour having been removed from Moscow's landscape. This great cathedral was modern, having been built in the middle of the last century to commemorate the victory over Napoleon in 1812. Its destruction was a cruel shock to the people of Moscow. On the site where it stood, the central portion of the Palace of the Soviets will rise.

The destruction of this cathedral was followed by another, and almost greater, blow to Moscow's faithful. The shrine of the Iberian Virgin—the place where the Tsar always prayed before entering the Kremlin—Moscow's most sacred shrine,

disappeared in a single night. This act on the part of the Soviet appeared to me a mistake. If the chapel impeded traffic into the Red Square, it could have been bodily removed to some other point, or could have been placed in a museum. I had looked upon the heap of blasted masonry which had been the Cathedral of the Saviour with deep regret, but when I beheld a score of labourers shovelling the dust of this most sacred shrine into motor-lorries, my feeling of regret became one of horror and disgust at this unnecessary act of sacrilege. I was astonished that the Moscow authorities had dared to thus flagrantly wound the feelings and susceptibilities of all decent citizens. I appreciated then for the first time that the U.S.S.R. is no longer a Christian country. The majority of its citizens to-day are not to be numbered amongst those who belong to the Christian Churches. Time is a wonderful healer, however, and flies fast in the U.S.S.R. Doubtless ten years hence the people of Moscow, living in an age of Marxian materialism, will point to the place where the shrine of the Iberian Virgin stood, telling their children how their grandparents had allowed themselves to be misled and overawed by the practice of strange religious observances on this spot. The children of Moscow in 1943 will know as little regarding Christianity as the youth in Great Britain to-day know of Buddhist rites in Thibet.

They will, however, be marshalled in their tens of thousands to Moscow's new shrine—the mausoleum in the Red Square, where the great interpreter of the Marxian programme of action lies embalmed under a glass canopy. No priests with

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swinging incensories will marshal them forward to kneel and kiss the coffin, but two soldiers of the Red Army will stand rigidly at attention, reminding the young people that respectful silence and the correct bearing of disciplined young Communists is demanded from them here as elsewhere.

Visitors to present-day Moscow will find much of interest awaiting them. The highly efficient guides of the Intourist Travel Bureau, and of the Society for Cultural Relationships with Foreigners, leave little opportunity for the visitor to Moscow to omit seeing its show places. They will be shown the Kremlin, with its Bell Tower of Ivan the Terrible, its old and now disused cathedrals, its great bell, and its semi-Asiatic Terem of the Tsars.

They will be conducted to the hospitals, maternity centres, crèches and infant schools, where they will see Soviet reforms in operation to the greatest advantage. They will probably be shown a psycho-analysis institution, where children have their vocations in life determined for them. A court of summary jurisdiction, a model prison (incidentally usually the Sokolniki Prison, where my two British colleagues, Mr. Thornton and Mr. MacDonald, were imprisoned), and an institution for "correcting" women rescued from the streets, will also probably be included in the itinerary.

In the evenings they will be taken to the Grand Opera House, where they will see opera or ballet produced which for the excellence of its staging and performance has few equals in Europe. At the Moscow Art Theatre they will see dramatic productions unequalled anywhere.

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As a matter of course, they will visit the Park of Culture and Rest. This park is in itself an education. Here one sees how thoroughly the Soviet authorities have realized the intense importance of training, influencing and disciplining the younger generation to walk in the path of Communism. Large pavilions are filled with most instructive models and diagrams, calculated to educate the people in the objects and attainments of the Government. Every activity and phase of the Government's great industrial programme is illustrated in a manner difficult to forget.

The gardens themselves are well laid out, and provide many entertainments. A special section is set aside for entertaining and educating school-children.

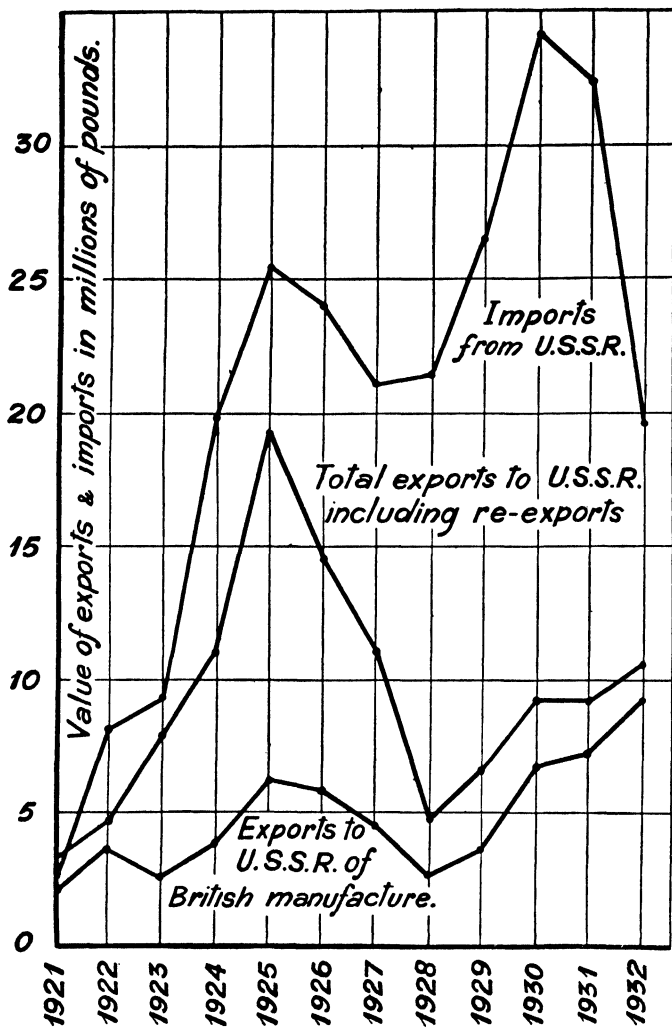
Effigies of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Pope, Mr. Churchill, Herr Hitler, Signor Mussolini, loom large on the entrance terraces of the garden, with suitable inscriptions ensuring that Moscow's young people do not fail to forget the alleged danger to the world's future happiness which these favourite targets for Moscow propagandists' verbal battery constitute. At the shooting gallery, politically minded visitors can find some added amusement in noticing the relative target values of various European political leaders.

Amongst Moscow's more recent attractions, the new Stadium and the Planetarium should be mentioned. These are characteristic of the definite move which the Soviets have made towards popularizing athletics and general scientific knowledge.

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Moscow—the new Moscow and the capital of the U.S.S.R.—is rapidly becoming the most interesting city in modern Europe, at least to the politician and the student of social and political economy.





**TOTAL TRADE BETWEEN UNITED KINGDOM**  
**AND U.S.S.R.**  
**(according to British Board of Trade Returns)**

## CHAPTER XVII

### BRITISH FIRMS AND THE FIVE YEAR PLAN

IN MAY 1927, the Home Office of the British Government considered it was in possession of sufficient evidence that certain envoys of the Soviet Government were indulging in illegal transactions, to the detriment of Great Britain, to justify a police raid on the premises of Messrs. Arcos Ltd. in London.

The necessity for this action has been questioned by many, but to most observers it would seem inconceivable that such a serious step should have been taken without proper consideration, and some good reason in its support.

The immediate effect of the step was that diplomatic relations were broken off between Great Britain and the U.S.S.R. on May 24th, 1927 ; and the Moscow Government issued a decree discouraging its State organizations from making purchases in Great Britain. A glance at the curve opposite (p. 236) will clearly indicate the loss to Great Britain, in export trade, which resulted from this break in relations. It will also be noticed that Great Britain's imports from U.S.S.R. did not drop in proportion ; and thus the adverse balance of trade, about which much has been said and written during recent years, became sufficiently marked to be serious.

In fairness to the Soviet authorities it should be pointed out that the Board of Trade returns, from which these curves were prepared, do not take into account "invisible exports"—i.e. money paid by the U.S.S.R. to Great Britain for shipping freights, insurances, interest, etc. It is naturally not easy to ascertain what such "invisible exports" amount to, but there is reason to believe that the figures are sufficiently high to make the trade balance much more favourable to Great Britain than it appears to be on these curves.

The Arcos raid, coming, as it did, just at the moment the U.S.S.R. was embarking on its first Five Year Plan, was a most serious matter for British manufacturers of all kinds of industrial equipment. Until this time, the Planning and Technical Departments of the Soviet Government had definitely counted on purchasing a very much larger proportion of their equipment in Great Britain than they ultimately did.

When the actual break of relationships occurred, I was in Leningrad. Acting on instructions from London, I notified the whole of the Metrovickers British staff in the U.S.S.R. that the Metropolitan Vickers Electrical Co. Ltd. would continue to carry out their obligations as previously, and asked the staff to remain quietly at their posts. This action was made the subject of considerable publicity, and was interpreted by the Soviet authorities as indicating that certain British manufacturers, including my employers, were not in agreement with the political moves which were being made.

On the actual day the telegram announcing the

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break of relations was published, some tens of thousands of people marched in an anti-British demonstration through the streets of Leningrad. As the contingent from the main power station was being formed up, I entered the yard to find that my own car was being used as a rostrum. The leaders promptly offered to vacate it, laughingly remarking to the crowd, "There you are ! British capitalism wants its car." When the procession was ready to move, I found I was becoming late for an appointment, and was therefore anxious to get away. After some good-natured and friendly banter with the ringleaders of this anti-British demonstration, it was arranged that the band should leave the premises first, then my car, and finally the procession of demonstrators. Thus we left the station. The workers cheered ironically, but, despite their having just listened to a violently anti-British speech, they were quite friendly in their bearing. It was perfectly clear that in this case, as in most cases which I have had the opportunity of observing, the demonstration had been ordered from political headquarters and was a compulsory parade. I have my suspicions that there were many thousands of people in the demonstration who were secretly pleased that the British Government had taken the action which it had.

A few British firms, however, contrived to maintain business relations with the U.S.S.R. even during the period when diplomatic relations were broken off. The Metropolitan Vickers Electrical Co. Ltd. was amongst those firms, and, during the first three years of the Five Year Plan, records show that there were periods when some forty per cent of the

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British subjects employed in the U.S.S.R. as specialists on erection and technical supervision were Metrovickers men. The company occupied the unique position of being the only British company interested in selling equipment to the U.S.S.R. to possess offices in that country. The Moscow technical and consulting bureau of the company was opened at the express invitation of the Commissariat of Foreign Trade of the U.S.S.R. The laws regulating the foreign trade of the U.S.S.R. place all trading transactions into the hands of the Commissariat of Foreign Trade. This Commissariat possesses its own specialized departments handling import, export, and Eastern trade. The department dealing with import trade entrusts its actual buying transactions to State importing organizations (as, for instance, Electro-import, Gormetmash-import, etc., etc.). These import organizations are supposed to possess men of special technical knowledge capable of handling negotiations between foreign suppliers and the actual users of equipment in the U.S.S.R. They must necessarily work in close contact with the State trading organizations which the Soviet Government have formed in the countries where they purchase most of their requirements—i.e. Messrs. Arcos Ltd. in London, Amtorg Trading Corporation in New York, the Yushamtorg Company in Buenos Aires, the Trade Delegation in Berlin, etc. In many cases the larger import organizations appoint a direct representative to the State trading organizations abroad, who nominally becomes head of a department directly representing its principals in Moscow. For instance, the electrical department



THE CATHEDRAL OF THE SAVIOUR, MOSCOW  
View taken from the Kremlin



“ A HEAP OF BLASTED MASONRY ”  
Photograph of the Cathedral of the Saviour after its demolition in 1931



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of Messrs. Arcos Ltd. in London directly represents Electro-import in Moscow, and its staff is largely drawn from Electro-import.

Messrs. Arcos Ltd. is a registered British company, which has for its primary object that of trading with the U.S.S.R. Its directors are virtually employees of the Commissariat of Foreign Trade, and hence Messrs. Arcos Ltd. are, for all practical purposes, a department of the Export and Import Sections of the Commissariat of Foreign Trade of the U.S.S.R. This Commissariat also has its direct official representative in London, in the person of the Chief of the Trade Delegation, who works in close contact with Messrs. Arcos Ltd. This official enjoyed diplomatic privileges until the denunciation of the Temporary Trade Agreement between Great Britain and the U.S.S.R. which took place on April 16th, 1933.

The law which defines the foreign trade monopoly forbids foreign manufacturers to get into direct contact with the users in the U.S.S.R. except through one of the import organizations. Although this precaution is obviously necessary under conditions existing in the U.S.S.R. it does, nevertheless, result in numerous technical misunderstandings and difficulties arising in carrying out large composite contracts. It was to obviate this difficulty that the authorities invited the Metropolitan Vickers Electrical Co. Ltd. to open their technical office in Moscow. This office, however, was primarily engaged on technical and erection work, and had no power to negotiate orders and contracts except under special authority given in each instance, and, in any case,



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agreements thus reached were subject to confirmation by Messrs. Arcos Ltd. in London.

Following the resumption of diplomatic relations between Great Britain and the U.S.S.R. in 1929, British firms began to display an increasing interest in trade with the State purchasing organizations in Moscow. During the summer of 1932, hardly a day passed that I did not come into contact with representatives of British firms endeavouring to negotiate contracts in the U.S.S.R. Not infrequently I found myself called in by the Soviet authorities to assist and give advice in negotiations, in which my own company had very little interest, if any; but I willingly agreed to render such assistance, because I fully realized the importance of establishing the good name of British manufacturers, particularly amongst young Soviet engineers and others who, during the most active years of 1928-1929, had had their attentions deliberately directed to Germany and America.

The privilege of maintaining a technical and consulting bureau in Moscow was extended to three Continental firms and one American firm, and the advantages of such an arrangement will readily be appreciated by any representatives of firms who have endeavoured to conduct business with the Soviet authorities in Moscow. The delays and setbacks which almost invariably occur in business negotiations in U.S.S.R. are for the most part due to the necessity of exerting the strictest control on all transactions involving the expenditure of foreign currency. Before an order for equipment for any part of the industrial development programme is

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placed, the purchasing authorities have to ascertain definitely that the necessity of its immediate purchase really exists, and also to ensure that the necessary foreign currency has been allocated to making payments for the particular equipment at the time such payments fall due. It is also necessary to ensure that no political or financial objections can be raised to the order being placed in the particular country concerned. As the Soviet Government's available resources for foreign purchases have decreased, due to the present crisis conditions in the markets where they sell their exports, the delays incurred in purchasing even essential equipment have become longer and more frequent. Every three months the estimated credits abroad for some years ahead are carefully allocated, and on many occasions I have found State purchasing organizations unable to issue even small orders for essential parts and tools, the absence of which has actually been detrimental to the industrial programme.

It is naturally difficult for the average foreign visitor who is endeavouring to negotiate orders in Moscow to realize this situation, and not infrequently I have met representatives of British and German firms whose patience has been tried almost to breaking-point by the procrastinatory methods of the Soviet officials. These methods, and the bureaucratic system in general, are now becoming so ingrained into the lives of the authorities in Moscow that they apparently entirely fail to realize the unfortunate impression created in the minds of foreigners who find themselves victims of apparently unnecessary delays.

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The difficulties which a foreigner encounters in maintaining a bureau in the U.S.S.R. are very considerable. Rents are extortionate, and salaries are exceedingly high. Russian clerical workers who would receive £3 per week in England will require approximately Roubles 250 per month in Moscow, which under present exchange conditions represents some £36. In addition to this a social insurance tax of 22 per cent must be paid on all salaries. Contributions for the Trade Union and income tax payments are also deducted by the employer and paid to the proper authorities monthly. These two activities in themselves involve work, and also necessitate all books being open to the public auditors at any time. Such simple details as the purchasing of note-paper, typewriter ribbons, etc., become serious matters, involving some days' delay during which the necessary official purchasing permits are obtained, since these goods are "deficit" commodities.

It may be of interest to record that I had considerable difficulty in persuading the Soviet authorities to allow me to engage Russian staff for the Metropolitan Vickers Electrical Company's offices in Moscow and Leningrad. The question as to whether or not foreigners might employ Russian citizens in the U.S.S.R. took some months to settle, but ultimately it was agreed that there was no legal objection to Russians accepting employment. Russian citizens thus employed enjoy certain advantages in working for foreigners, inasmuch as frequently they are allowed to receive some small part of their salary in foreign currency, or its equivalent,

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but the disadvantages under which they work are sufficiently obvious when it is remembered that ten of the Metropolitan Vickers Electrical Company's employees were arrested with my colleagues and myself on March 11th. One was released prior to the trial, and four after the trial. One, Miss Kutusova, was tried and sentenced with us ; and three have been sent away from Moscow, into the northern districts, without public trial.

The total value of the equipment which has been supplied by British manufacturers under the Five Year Plan approaches £15,000,000 including power station, steam raising, generating and transforming plant, switch gear, gas-producer plant, blast-furnace equipment, machine tools of all kinds, locomotives, coal cleaning plant, excavating and digging plant, and textile machinery of all kinds.

When the Metropolitan Vickers Electrical Company decided to accept the invitation to establish a technical and consulting office in Moscow, the question of housing accommodation for its staff arose. Suitable accommodation was unobtainable, and therefore it was decided to secure a section of land on the outskirts of the city and build wooden houses, to house the whole of the British staff and provide accommodation for visitors. The building of this house provided me with a most interesting insight into the law of private property in the U.S.S.R. Only when I came to negotiate the long-term lease of the land did I realize that the Soviet authorities encourage citizens of the U.S.S.R. to build their own houses. Zastroishiki, as such home-builders are called, are allowed to acquire land on a forty-five-year

lease, after which the property returns to the State, but the owner is compensated for his expenditure in building in accordance with a valuation made by the State valuation officials. During the first five years, citizens building their own houses pay no rent for the land, and are exempted from paying rates and taxes. They are also freed from liability of having workers and soldiers billeted upon them. The houses which were built by the Metropolitan Vickers Electrical Co. Ltd. at Perlovskaja, one of which is shown in the illustration opposite p. 304, were built under these conditions. In fact the agreement which I signed with the local authorities was a standard printed form, and no allowance was made for the fact that I represented a British firm and was not an ordinary Soviet citizen.

Having secured the land and fenced it, building materials were purchased from the State distributing authorities with foreign currency. At this time the enormous building programme which the Moscow authorities had in hand rendered it impossible for them to permit any materials passing into the hands of private builders, except under exceptional conditions. Apparently the prospect of payment in sterling was enough to ensure our being allowed to purchase all the materials we needed, and even permitted our taking precedence over many State departments. The construction which we adopted was of the usual log type common in Central and Northern Russia. The unsawn logs are hand-trimmed, and fitted together with tow caulked between them. A wall of this type, made from eight-inch-diameter logs, resists the intense cold of a Russian winter better

than twenty-eight inches of brickwork, which is the standard thickness for brick walls in the U.S.S.R.

Labour was not easy to obtain in Moscow, and hence we arranged with peasants whom we knew, living in villages some hundred miles from the city, to come to Perlovskaja to do the building work, which was let to them as contract piece-work. The skill displayed by these peasant wood-workers is extraordinary, and invariably commands the admiration of foreigners seeing them at work for the first time. Electric light was available, but, when it came to discussing water supply, we found that we were faced with the alternative of sinking a deep artesian well or making arrangements to tap Moscow's main water-supply pipes, which passed within two hundred yards of our property. The extraordinary trust which the Moscow authorities placed in us at that time is indicated by the fact that we were given permission to tap a four-inch main into the Moscow main aqueduct, and were allowed to do the work ourselves with our own workmen.

## CHAPTER XVIII

# TRANSPORT AND TRAVEL IN THE U.S.S.R.

THE ENTIRE transport system of the U.S.S.R. comes under the People's Commissariat of Ways of Communication (N.K.P.S.). This ministry has four sub-sections dealing with (1) Railway Transport ; (2) Internal Water Transport ; (3) Marine Transport ; and (4) Road Transport.

The reorganization of the transport system was one of the essential requirements of the Five Year Plan. In dealing with this problem the Soviet Government were confronted with extraordinary difficulties. They had for their object the development of a State system of communications and transport based primarily on the country's economic requirements ; whereas much of what had been done in pre-war days by the Imperialist Governments had been done for strategic reasons only. Climatic conditions, and the fact that agricultural products form a large part of the freight carried, render the load on the transport system distinctly seasonable. The U.S.S.R. possesses many fine waterways, but here, too, the climatic conditions prevent their being used during long periods of the year. The seasonal nature of much of the traffic led the State Planning authorities to decide that they would double-track and electrify their main lines, and develop certain of their waterways, but would not

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fall into the error of covering their country with a network of unprofitable branch lines. This decision was made after a careful study of the railway-traffic conditions in the U.S.A., where the development of branch lines has been carried to an extreme, and, according to the Soviet economists, has proved economically unjustifiable. This policy obviously necessitated an extensive road-development programme, and the establishment of works for building and maintaining heavy motor-transport vehicles.

At the commencement of the Soviet régime in the U.S.S.R. the total length of the railways was 63,640 kilometres. During the interventionist and civil wars, over a thousand miles of line and 7,762 bridges, including some of the largest bridges in Russia, were destroyed. In addition to this, some three thousand switch and signal cabins were wrecked, and the telephone and telegraph equipment which they contained had to be replaced when railway services were reorganized.

Despite these drawbacks, the railway system was astonishingly rapidly re-established, and much new constructional work was done in the early years of the régime. At the commencement of the Five Year Plan in 1928, 76,837 kilometres of line were in operation. On May 1st, 1930, the Turkestan-Siberian line, connecting the cotton- and fruit-growing areas of Turkestan and Uzbekstan with Central Siberia, was completed. This line was 1,445 kilometres in length, and its completion in record time constituted a very fine engineering feat. Other new lines which have been built during



recent years bring the industrial districts of the Ural Mountains and the new coal-fields at Karaganda into touch with Central Siberia and Central Asia. Comparatively few new lines have been built in European Russia, although the main arterial line connecting Moscow with the Donetz Basin is being duplicated in order to deal with the greatly increased traffic. This line will also soon be electrified. The total mileage which the Soviet Government intend to electrify during the second Five Year Plan is approximately twenty thousand kilometres. A start has been made on the Trans-Caucasian Railway, where the mountain section between Stalinissi (Hashuri) and Zestafoni is already being worked with heavy electrical locomotives. The oil traffic over this line will necessitate handling some twenty-eight pairs of heavy oil trains per day. Another electrified line which is about to be put into commission is the Lunovski branch of the Perm-Kizel line in the Urals. This electrification has also been undertaken in order to solve the difficulty of handling heavy freight and mineral trains down mountain-grades.

Around Moscow, Leningrad and Baku suburban electrification is being proceeded with. The Moscow-Mitishi line is now electrified for some sixty miles north of Moscow, and is carrying a very heavy passenger service. The underground railway now under construction in Moscow, which has already been referred to, is intended to relieve the present overcrowding of tramcars and buses and also the congestion which is caused by pedestrians in the streets.

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The most ambitious scheme which those who are responsible for making the State plans for railway electrification now have in view is the electrification of the main Siberian line between the Urals and the Kuznetz Basin, thus bringing the two great new industrial districts into close economic contact with each other.

The volume of freight carried on the railways of the U.S.S.R. has risen by leaps and bounds. The following table shows the actual increase in freight carried during recent years :

<i>Year</i>	<i>Millions of Tons</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Millions of Tons</i>
1925 . .	92.4	1929 . .	187.6
1926 . .	122.3	1930 . .	238.7
1927 . .	139.5	1931 . .	250.0
1928 . .	155.2	1932 . .	254.9

It should be noted that the figure of 254.9 million tons carried in 1932 is in excess of the original Five Year Plan figure, which was 240.3 million tons.

It has recently been reported that the authorities have found it necessary to take special steps to prevent transport becoming the determining feature in limiting the economic development of the country. The directorates of the railways deserve every credit for the way in which they have tackled and dealt with the transport problems which the enormous constructional activities of the first Five Year Plan imposed upon them. The volume of freight carried over the Moscow-Kazan Railway lines on the south-east of Moscow during a period of several months in 1931 and 1932 created a world's record. It must be remembered, moreover, that this is being done with old locomotives and antiquated rolling stock. The great new locomotive-building plants at Lugansk, Kuznetsk and Orsk are not yet

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in full production, and the older works at Kolomna, Sormovo, and in Leningrad, have not been able to supply the demand for new locomotives. The traffic on the railways during the next few years will increase rapidly, and it has been estimated that another thirty thousand kilometres of new track must be laid before 1937 in order to deal with the increased annual freight, which it is anticipated will grow to approximately seven hundred and fifty million tons by that time.

During recent years every attention has been given to successfully moving freight, and comparatively little attention has been devoted to improving passenger travel. On the other hand, the amount of passenger traffic has increased out of all proportion to the planned figures. The original plan calculated to convey 416.7 million passengers in 1932, and actually the number carried was 890.0 million passengers—i.e. more than twice as many as the State Planning authorities had in view. This immense increase was doubtless partially due to the migratory movements of peasants, which have occurred as a consequence of the Soviet Government banishing the kulaks and the wealthier peasants from their villages. The publication of these figures at least explains the difficulties which travellers in the U.S.S.R. now find in procuring railway tickets unless they invoke the assistance of the O.G.P.U. or other powerful local authorities.

Passenger railway travel in the U.S.S.R. is far from a pleasant experience unless one is lucky enough to secure a sleeping berth in one of the International Sleeping Car Company's old coaches,

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which have now been nationalized, and may be found attached to many main-line expresses. The ordinary coaches are crowded and are seldom clean. The majority of the main-line expresses are, however, *platzkart* trains, in which the number of passengers carried is limited to the number of sleeping berths available.

Classes have been abolished in name only. Nominally there is no first, second or third class, but, by paying approximately double the ordinary fare, one can obtain seats in upholstered coaches. By paying still a little higher figure places may be obtained in the International Sleeping Cars. This distinction is quite officially recognized, and tickets are printed with the words "Soft" and "Hard" in order to distinguish between what is in fact first and third class.

There are few better ways of studying the views and reactions of the people of a country than by travelling in long-distance trains. The journey from Moscow to Baku, or the Urals, involves three days and nights continuous travelling in a through coach, whereas to Central Asia and the Kuznetz Basin the time required to make the journey may be six days.

Russian-speaking visitors, making these journeys, almost always find that their Russian co-travellers are willing to talk freely about their country and its future. Restaurant cars are attached to a few of the better trains leaving Moscow, but most trains have no such accommodation, and travellers have to provide their own meals, buying roast chickens, boiled eggs and other farm products from peasant hawkers at wayside stations.

One usually finds during railway journeys in the U.S.S.R. that the little table in each compartment becomes an untidy food-store for a very mixed company. Black bread, apples, portions of cold roast chicken wrapped in newspaper, a tin kettle and an opened tin of *kilki* (anchovies) may be cited as typical of the type of mess one finds under one's nose in a Russian train. It would be incorrect to omit several packets of cigarettes from the list of items on the little table. Men and women alike in the U.S.S.R. are inveterate smokers. At main stations one has to rush out with one's tin kettle for boiling water, which incidentally the law demands that the railway administration shall supply, free of charge, to travellers at every large station.

The passenger accommodation at most stations in the U.S.S.R., except some of the larger ones in Moscow, is very poor indeed, and apparently no effective efforts have been made to make good this serious deficiency.

The development of roads has become a major problem in the U.S.S.R. Numbers of American road-making specialists have been employed as consultants, and work is being proceeded with in several districts. Road-making conditions are difficult, due to the extremes of climate and the boggy nature of the soil in many areas. The old *chaussées* radiating from Moscow, and dating back to pre-railway days, were well surveyed roads, but their surfaces were made with small rounded cobbles laid on sand. It is being found necessary to remove these cobbled surfaces and replace them with

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surfaces better suited to motor traffic. Many bridges have had to be strengthened or rebuilt, since the old wooden bridges were incapable of carrying modern heavy road-transport vehicles.

The development of the State grain farms in the Kuban district, and in the cotton-growing and new agricultural districts of Central Asia, has necessitated many large road-construction schemes being put in hand.

Water transport on the great inland waterways of the U.S.S.R. will play an important part in the future development of the country. The Volga, the Neva, the Dnieper and the Northern Dvina were used considerably for water transport in pre-war days. The plans of the Soviet Government for the development of its waterways, in conjunction with large hydro-electric and irrigation schemes, are extraordinarily ambitious. The first step in this great work was accomplished when the Dnieperstroi Dam was completed. This rendered the Dnieper navigable as far as Kiev. The present plans provide for the making of a waterway right through from the Dnieper to the Volchov River, and thus connect the Black Sea with Lake Ladoga and Leningrad. This will enable the Privit Marshes to be drained, bringing under cultivation some four million acres which are at present waste marshland. As Lake Ladoga is already connected with the White Sea through the recently completed White Sea-Baltic Canal, and with the Volga and the Suhona through the canals of the Mariinski system, the construction of this Leningrad-Black Sea Canal will bring virtually all parts of industrial Russia into canal

communication. A new canal is also to be made directly connecting Moscow with the Volga. Another great canal scheme which is now actually being commenced is that of joining the Don River and the Caspian Sea. This great canal will be over four hundred kilometres in length, and will be fed with waters from the Terek River.

On the Volga, another scheme is to be proceeded with, which, although it will not appreciably affect the use of the river for navigation, will permit a very large area of unproductive desert to come under cultivation. This is the construction of the Kamishinski Dám, which will have a length of approximately seventeen kilometres, and will involve the building of a very large power station, the power from which will, however, be utilized largely for pumping in connection with the irrigation schemes.

From the details given in the foregoing paragraphs it will be apparent that inland water-transport is having very serious attention in the U.S.S.R., in spite of the fact that navigation is impossible on its canals and rivers for some four months every year.

Passenger accommodation on the river steamers in the U.S.S.R. is reasonably good, although travellers are well advised to provide themselves with "Keating's Powder," before undertaking river journeys.

Air routes are providing a more popular method of travel for senior officials. The advantages of air travel in a country such as the U.S.S.R. are too obvious to require emphasis. Kuznetzstroi, for instance, cannot be reached from Moscow by train

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in less than five days, whereas one can leave Moscow by aeroplane one morning and be in Kuznetzstroi before lunch on the following day. I have already made reference to the air trip which I made to the Caucasus in 1930. The flights made on this trip were made in aeroplanes employed to maintain the regular passenger and mail service, and the mountain flights were made in small machines of Russian manufacture. The total distance which I covered by air during this trip was approximately four thousand five hundred miles, and the time taken in air travel was only three and a half days.



## CHAPTER XIX

### A CHANGING NATION

IN THE FOREGOING chapters sufficient has been said to indicate that a radical change has occurred during the last fifteen years in the lives and outlook of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. Prior to the revolution the great mass of Russia's peasantry and workers knew nothing of politics and political economy. They were taught from their childhood onwards that they must place implicit faith in the teachings of the Orthodox Church and be obedient to their Tsar—"The Little Father." They knew that interference in political matters usually resulted in arousing the suspicions of the "Ohranka." Thus the great majority of the peace-loving peasantry definitely avoided all contact with political issues. The revolution has been as complete as the literal meaning of the word can be interpreted to make it. The workers have had politics and economics thrust at them from every side and angle for fifteen years, and the peasantry are now being taught "political grammar" as rapidly as many thousands of trained political instructors can reach them in their villages and on the collective farms.

The Marxian doctrine holds that "religion is opium for the people." The workers and peasantry of the U.S.S.R. are being rapidly induced to throw aside the religious teachings of pre-war days, and a

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new doctrine takes their place which imposes implicit obedience to the Marxian Programme of Action in the form in which it is being interpreted by "Comrade" Stalin and his associates.

The attitude of the older peasants to these new teachings has not been so enthusiastic as that with which they have been accepted by the majority of the older industrial workers of the cities and by the younger generation both in the industrial towns and in the villages. This is, after all, only natural. From what has been said in a previous chapter, it has already been made clear that the effect of the agrarian policy of the Soviet Government has been to destroy entirely that comparatively happy village life so vividly depicted in the works of Gogol. The majority of the wealthier peasants have had their homes broken up and their families scattered. The poorer peasants—the *bedniaki*—took upon themselves a task which they were incompetent and unsuited to undertake when they allowed themselves to be goaded by political agitators into the management of the collective farms. Their failures in many areas, for which they can hardly be held responsible, have naturally incurred for them the displeasure of the authorities. The President of the Central Executive Committee of the Congress of Soviets, Kalinin—an ex-peasant—in referring to the sufferings of the peasantry on the unsuccessful collective farms at the present time, recently said ". . . the collective farm people this year have passed through a good school—for some this school is quite ruthless."

In some of the villages, as in the towns, the young people who have thrown in their lot with the

new authorities are comparatively content, but it is to be feared that the training which they are now getting will not prepare them for the strenuous and hard-working life which natural conditions in the U.S.S.R., as elsewhere, demand from those who wish to derive successful results from agriculture.

In the industrial towns Communism has met with greater success. It has always been amongst the industrial workers of the cities that agitators have found converts to extreme Socialist propaganda. It is the younger generation of industrial workers that is now playing a most important rôle in the development of the U.S.S.R. The Moscow Government realize the importance of carrying the rising generation with them, and consequently have left no stone unturned in their endeavours to improve their material conditions and instil into them that enthusiasm and keenness which the situation demands that they should exhibit. Many of the younger workers are genuinely filled with energy and enthusiasm. The Government deliberately fosters this enthusiasm by giving public praise and substantial financial rewards for individual acts where keenness and ability have been displayed. Under existing conditions promotion is naturally rapid, and this too helps the authorities to maintain an atmosphere of keenness. The rising generation thus feels itself successful, and is led to believe that it is now leading the world to a higher civilization and to a better standard of living for all.

The youth of the present generation has witnessed the extraordinary progress made during the last five years in the industrial development of their

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country : extensive factories and works, new railways, super power stations and many large new industrial towns have sprung into existence where previously there was forest and steppe. The young people possess a very limited knowledge of the outside world which, from the time they were children, has been consistently described to them as a place where the proletariat suffer under capitalist oppression, and where crisis conditions are such as they themselves knew in 1917-1922. They do not know that the British working people, and even many of those unable to find work in Great Britain, enjoy an infinitely higher standard of living than they can hope to obtain for some time to come. They also do not know that whilst the U.S.S.R. has been carrying out a State-controlled programme of industrial development which has attracted the attention of the world, the capitalist nations have also not stood still. Despite the present world crisis, British industry can point to great developments which have occurred during the last fifteen years, and which can compare with those of the U.S.S.R. The young Communist in Moscow knows nothing of this. He is shown a comparative diagram indicating that while the U.S.S.R. has put 37 modern blast furnaces into blow the output of pig iron in Great Britain has dropped from 6.7 million tons to 3.6 million tons per annum between the years 1928 and 1932. Billingham, Appleby, Dagenham, Cowley and Llandarcy are names on the map of Great Britain which signify nothing whatsoever to the young Russian.

The cities and the new industrial areas of the

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U.S.S.R. have built modernized housing accommodation since the revolution to house some seven million workers. The fact that between 1921 and March 31st, 1928, some 1,020,123 houses, capable of housing over five million people under conditions infinitely better than those obtaining in the U.S.S.R., were built under the "crumbling capitalist system in Great Britain" is not known to the young supporters of the Marxian Programme of Action in the U.S.S.R. The apparent successes which have attended the great efforts made to fulfil the first Five Year Plan have led many of those responsible to acquire an attitude of boastfulness which at times borders on arrogance. In their intense enthusiasm these people fail to appreciate that where capital is available the construction of works and factory buildings, and the installation of modern machinery purchased from abroad, is a comparatively easy task compared with that of organizing production and training labour so that these new enterprises are actually made to produce the outputs which they were planned to produce according to calculations based on massed production standards in capitalist countries. The difficulties of achieving and maintaining calculated outputs are only now becoming realized.

The young workers who are now becoming the administrators of many of the State enterprises in the U.S.S.R. have an entirely materialistic outlook on life. They have no knowledge of any kind of religion ; their whole time—their very existence—is bound up in the building of the Communist State. The conditions under which they live and

## A CHANGING NATION

work have definitely improved since 1917. They are paid reasonably well, and, taking into consideration the special privileges which most of them enjoy in the matter of purchasing food-stuffs and commodities, they are comparatively well off. They are provided with every kind of educational facility. Recreation in the form of physical culture and sports is regarded by the State authorities as being of the utmost importance. The Soviet Government foresee a time when over-production will necessitate a gradual reduction of working hours for the community. Many years may elapse before this point is reached in the U.S.S.R., on account of the enormous leeway in the production of commodities which has now to be made up.

Nevertheless, such a period will without doubt ultimately be reached. When that time comes, it is of intense importance that the community should be trained to make proper use of their leisure hours, and for this reason alone it is particularly interesting to note the provisions which the Soviet authorities are making to provide recreation and suitable leisure-time occupations for young people.

In every city and industrial town in the U.S.S.R. to-day facilities are provided for physical culture and for healthy outdoor sports. Football is being rapidly popularized—not as a game to be watched, but as a game to be played. Tennis, basket-ball and the national game of *gorodki*, are in considerable favour. Cycling is growing in popularity as fast as the cycle factory erected in Moscow under the supervision of B.S.A. engineers can produce bicycles. Winter sports, including ski-ing and skating,

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are universal amongst the younger generation. Stadiums have been built in Moscow, Leningrad, Harkov and other large cities. Almost every small town and works now possesses its own cinematograph, workers' club and evening school.

The activities of the Soviet authorities in the building and equipment of hospitals, maternity homes, crèches and other allied institutions have earned the well-deserved praise of many scores of visitors from Western Europe.

It has frequently been asserted that the existing marriage and divorce laws in the U.S.S.R., about which much has been written, cannot ultimately have other than unhappy results, but, contrary to expectations, it is a fact that even among the majority of Communists the idea of abolishing marriage as a permanent tie has not met with complete approval. Even the younger generation in the towns appear to adhere to age-old traditions and usage when it comes to the question of courtship and marriage, although much of the romance which surrounds those states has been torn away from them by the materialistic teachings of Marxism. To my mind this is one of the most unfortunate developments in the lives of the young people in the U.S.S.R.

The older generation in the U.S.S.R. who have known times which were undoubtedly better, do not view the present state of affairs with the same rosy outlook as their younger and more enthusiastic compatriots. The educated and affluent Russians of pre-war St. Petersburg who yearly visited their villas on the Riviera, and who furnished the capitals of

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Western Europe with the extraordinary ideas of Russia which until recently predominated, have of course gone. Many of them are dead, but many are living as *émigrés* in Western Europe. The majority of these people should never have been regarded as representatives of the real Russia. They were cosmopolitans who drew their funds from Russia, and such part of the year as they were not living in Western Europe they spent in St. Petersburg—itself a modern city which can hardly be called typical of Russia.

The wealthy merchants and industrialists who in many instances were definitely exploiters of Russia's proletariat in pre-revolutionary times also have gone.

The professional classes of pre-war Russia—the doctors, the lawyers, the engineers and others—have for the most part remained at their posts throughout, endeavouring to “carry on” under conditions which render the number of deaths and suicides amongst them explicable. Many of these men unquestionably worked hard in the interests of the Soviet Government, and during the years 1925–1929 they definitely did good work. Early in 1924 I visited Balakna Power Station, on the Volga, and on my return journey I travelled with the Red director of the Sormovo Works—one of Russia's largest engineering establishments. He told me with assurance that within three years the universities would turn out their first “batches” of Red engineers, and that when these men became available the “technical men of old-tempering” would go unless they were exceptional men whose loyalty to the Soviets was



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absolutely unquestionable. At the time I was sceptical as to whether his forecast would prove correct, but I was to learn some years later that his assertion was apparently a statement of a definite policy. In 1929 I was to see many chief engineers—men of long experience and men whom I believed were working loyally for the Soviet—ruthlessly removed from their posts and replaced by young Party men whose theoretical and political training was without question excellent, but who possessed exceedingly flimsy practical qualifications for the high positions in which they were placed.

During the years 1929-1933 numerous incidents of this nature came to my notice. Not infrequently men whose loyalty to the existing régime in the U.S.S.R. was to my mind unquestionable were summarily removed from their posts. Often this was done in accordance with the decision of a Purging Commission, but only too frequently sterner methods, involving arrest and detention by the O.G.P.U. authorities, were resorted to. The unfortunate representatives of the old intelligentsia who have suffered in this way are greatly to be pitied. In many cases I know that the desire exists in their hearts to work loyally for their Government, even although they may not entirely support its principles, but they are prevented from doing so satisfactorily by the ever-present cloud of suspicion under which they exist and by a constantly gnawing anxiety regarding the future. They live in a demoralizing atmosphere of suspicion, anxiety and fear. Under these circumstances it appears to me that the Soviet authorities frequently drive men who are

## CHAPTER XX

### THE O.G.P.U.

THE RÔLE played in the U.S.S.R. by the O.G.P.U., or, as the Russians style it, Oa-gay-pay-oo, is one of such extreme importance that this highly efficient and much dreaded organization is worthy of treatment in a chapter devoted entirely to itself. When the Soviet Government took upon itself the responsibilities of government, it promptly, and not without justification, appointed a special commission for dealing with all attempts at counter-revolution. This body was known as the "Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution," which lengthy title was shortened down to "Cheka." In the early days of the Soviet régime the Cheka had a difficult and dangerous task to perform. The country seethed with political discontent and counter-revolution, and at that time counter-revolutionary and Interventionist armies were converging on Moscow from all sides. A glance at the map opposite p. 272, which has been reproduced from a British Government Blue Book, published on July 15th, 1920, will clearly indicate the position in which the Soviet Government found itself, and with this in mind it is small wonder that those responsible for the Cheka's activities decided to employ extreme preventive and punitive measures to stamp out treachery and counter-revolutionary activities on the home front.

## THE O.G.P.U.

The Imperial Government had for many years employed the "Ohranka" for combating the revolutionary activities of the political parties who plotted the overthrow of the Tsar's régime. The Ohranka had its secret agents in every walk of Russian life, and few knew better than the leaders of the political parties what terrors and punishments awaited revolutionaries in pre-war Russia. Almost every one of Lenin's associates had suffered much at the hand of the Ohranka.

It was therefore not unnatural that the Cheka adopted the methods of the Ohranka, but the threatening conditions existing at the time led them to institute a technique in dealing with their victims which has been frequently referred to as the "Red Terror." Extreme cruelties were undoubtedly practised, but it is only reasonable to state that there is ample evidence that not dissimilar methods were also resorted to by the White Armies who were then attacking the Soviets.

When the civil war was over, and the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics was finally formed on July 6th, 1923, the constitution which was adopted on that day by the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R., sitting for the first time, provided for the formation of a United State Political Department (O.G.P.U.) which was to "combine the revolutionary efforts of the united republics in the fight with political and economic counter-revolution, espionage and banditism." The constitution states that the O.G.P.U. is "attached to the Council of People's Commissars (Sovnarcom) of the U.S.S.R.," and that its President enters the Council

of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R. with an advisory voice. Supervision of the legality of the actions of the O.G.P.U. of the U.S.S.R. is, according to the constitution, carried out by the Procurator of the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R.

The O.G.P.U. of the present day has its headquarters in a large building, which it has recently considerably extended, in the Lubianski Square in Moscow. It is for this reason that the much-dreaded organization is quite usually referred to amongst the inhabitants of Moscow as the "Lubianka."

A large area of the city north of the Lubianski Square is now devoted to O.G.P.U. institutions, and to housing its staff and its own special troops. The majority of the troops actually garrisoned in the city of Moscow at the present day are in fact O.G.P.U. troops, who may, in general, be distinguished by the red facings on their tunics and their red capbands. The troops guarding the extensive frontiers of the U.S.S.R. are also under the command of the O.G.P.U. These frontier troops may be distinguished by the green facings on their uniforms. Generally speaking the O.G.P.U. are the smartest troops in the U.S.S.R., and most excellent discipline prevails throughout their organization.

It is not, however, the uniformed and well-disciplined troops of the O.G.P.U. which strike terror into the hearts of the great mass of the population, but it is their wonderfully organised network of secret agents and informers. At the present time in the U.S.S.R. it is never safe to assume that anyone is entirely disconnected from the O.G.P.U. There are many thousands of Soviet

## THE O.G.P.U.

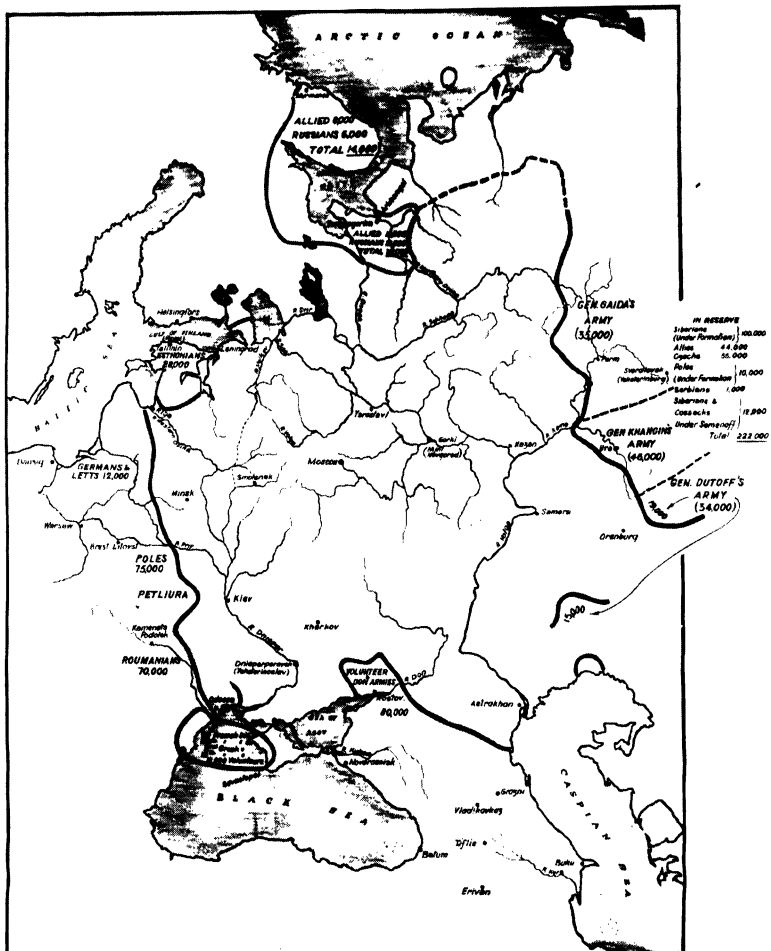
citizens whose temperaments and natures are definitely opposed to their acting as spies for the O.G.P.U., who, nevertheless, are called upon periodically to submit themselves to close cross-examination regarding the activities of their associates. In such cases the unwilling informers are scared into absolute secrecy by threats of terrible consequences, both to themselves and to their relatives, if they ever reveal that they have even been summoned for interview.

The methods employed by the O.G.P.U. officials in such interviews and examinations are the same in every part of the country, thus indicating that their agents have received careful instruction in the procedure to be adopted in carrying out their work of investigation. Almost invariably the first interview takes place in a private house, and the unwilling informer is treated with the utmost civility and politeness—Christian name and patronymic being almost invariably employed in conversation. In such cases the examining agent has usually made it his duty to ascertain as much as possible regarding any friendships or liaisons which the informer may have had, and this knowledge is invariably made use of in one way or another. Where such friendships have been secret, the lever which the O.G.P.U. agent then possesses is obvious, but, where the attachment has been open and still exists, the victim finds himself, or herself, called upon to comply with the agent's wishes in order to protect a loved one from similar treatment or something worse.

In the majority of O.G.P.U. investigations by

secret agents, women are brought into the scheme in one way or another. This is particularly the case where the O.G.P.U. wish to keep themselves informed of the movements and actions of foreigners living in the U.S.S.R.

About the time that the break of diplomatic relations occurred between Great Britain and the U.S.S.R., the Moscow authorities were keeping a very close watch on the actions of the British engineers who remained in the country. In this connection I had an amusing and interesting experience. I set out from Moscow on a three-days' journey to Baku, to find that the widow of a man who had held a high position under the Government was my travelling companion. She was a good-looking woman of Cossack birth, a fine horse-woman, well read, and, moreover, had travelled extensively. She told me a plausible tale of her sister having been taken suddenly ill in Baku, for which reason she was making her journey south. During our three days on the train, she introduced me to Enukidse—the veteran secretary of the Sovnarcom, who was occupying a special coach attached to the train; and she told me many interesting stories of life amongst the Cossacks and Caucasian peoples. I spent two days in Baku, and my surprise may be imagined when, on occupying my coupé for the return journey, I found the same dark daughter of a Cossack hetman was again to be my travelling companion. On our return journey, *she introduced me to various members of the Trans-Caucasian Government who were on the train—proceeding to a meeting of the Executive Council*



MAP OF RUSSIA, SHOWING THE POSITIONS OF THE WHITE  
ARMIES IN THE SPRING OF 1918





of the Soviets in Moscow. Whilst travelling through Daghestan our train was delayed many hours due to a railway accident, and, during the time we were thus held up, several members of the party visited a neighbouring Daghestan village. I was particularly glad of this, because apart from the interest of seeing the life of the village at close quarters I was also able to convince myself that my travelling companion's claim to knowing the language and customs of those peoples was no idle statement. This woman had lived a most romantic and exciting life, the greater part of which she had spent in the Caucasus. From the first evening I had realized, however, that the object of her journey had been to make a full report on my attitude towards the Soviet Government to the O.G.P.U. authorities in Moscow, and subsequently I was to learn that my surmise regarding this clever and accomplished kazatchka (Cossack woman) was not incorrect.

Following my return to Moscow, I visited this lady on one occasion at her flat and, to my surprise, was there introduced to a man whom I knew by sight as one of the senior officials of the O.G.P.U., although of course she introduced him to me as her friend. Doubtless her employers imagined that the six days travelling together might have permitted her to get that particular form of hold over me which they apparently find most useful in their dealings with their victims. I assume, however, that this woman was forced to undertake the mission which she did, and I can only hope she was not subjected to any serious censure for having failed to carry out her instructions successfully.

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This is by no means the only incident of this kind of which I had direct evidence during my residence in the U.S.S.R. Only too often have I seen foreign visitors fall easy prey to these O.G.P.U.-appointed ministering angels, who are usually introduced as interpreters and guides. In fairness to Intourist, and to the Society for Cultural Relationships with Foreigners, I must say that I have never seen direct evidence of any of their staffs being thus employed. Where foreigners live for a considerable period in the U.S.S.R., they invariably find that their employees and their servants are summoned by the O.G.P.U. to give information regarding their employers.

There is little doubt that the O.G.P.U. themselves circulate fantastic tales of the tortures and punishments which it is alleged are employed in their prisons and places of detention. When the new headquarters of the Leningrad O.G.P.U. were recently completed, a terrible rumour was circulated throughout the city regarding an elaborate mincing-machine in which it was alleged that the O.G.P.U. destroyed their victims before washing their remains out into the Neva. Although I am convinced that there does not exist the slightest pretext for this rumour, it was nevertheless firmly believed by thousands of Leningrad's inhabitants. In Moscow one frequently hears fantastic tales of physical tortures to which the O.G.P.U. are reputed to subject their victims. Many of these alleged tortures completely eclipse the horrors of the Spanish Inquisition, but it is my own conviction that such methods are not used by the O.G.P.U.,

and, in fact, I very much doubt whether many of their reputed victims are ever shot. The O.G.P.U. have a definite purpose in circulating such wild stories of their methods, and there is little doubt that, when they detain their own nationals for questioning and examination, the mere existence of these rumours is in itself sufficient to so terrify their victims as to make them comply readily with the examiner's demands without the O.G.P.U. officers themselves resorting to anything other than a little exaggerated politeness and firmness.

Whether torture and the extreme punishment are used or not, one thing is certain, and that is that the O.G.P.U. have struck terror into the hearts of the whole populace. Every dweller in the U.S.S.R. walks in fear of those who preside at the Lubianka, and their agents. The mere name of the O.G.P.U. is seldom referred to audibly and openly.

The manner in which the O.G.P.U. act in obedience to the plans and impulses of the political group who dictate policy in the U.S.S.R. will be sufficiently obvious from the chapters following dealing with the recent trial of my colleagues and myself in Moscow.

The importance of the O.G.P.U. being completely in the hands of the political dictators of the Kremlin cannot be over-exaggerated in Moscow's dealings with the constituent republics of the U.S.S.R. Nominally these republics are in many respects autonomous, as they possess a large measure of self-government. The constitution of the U.S.S.R. clearly defines in what respects the Moscow

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Government's actions are limited in these outlying republics. On the other hand, the actions of the O.G.P.U. are not limited by anything in the constitution of the U.S.S.R., and, although the Moscow Government may not be constitutionally able to influence decisions in the autonomous republics of the Union, nevertheless the O.G.P.U. is in a position to take steps against the instigators of any political action contrary to the wishes of the Moscow political dictators. Thus the O.G.P.U., in the hands of Stalin and his Party associates, constitutes one of the strongest "unifying influences" existing in the U.S.S.R., and ensures that the constituent republics comply implicitly with the demands of the central Communist Party executive in Moscow.

Early in 1933 the power of the O.G.P.U. was greatly strengthened by a decision to place the civil police force of the whole country under its general supervision. Previously the civil police forces had been subject to the local Soviets only.

Following Stalin's speech in Moscow on January 7th, 1933, a decision was made to establish political control on the collective and State farms throughout the U.S.S.R. Many thousands of Party agents were sent into the country districts, and, as has already been stated, the Communist Party Executive recently announced that 10,139 specially chosen Party workers had been sent into the villages to take charge of the political side of the work on the farms. The relationship between these Party workers and the O.G.P.U. can probably be guessed even by those who have little knowledge of the U.S.S.R.

## THE O.G.P.U.

More recently, and following the Moscow Trial, the Government have considered it necessary to enforce the provision in the constitution of the U.S.S.R. which provides that supervision of the legality of actions of the O.G.P.U. shall be carried out by the Procurator of the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R. According to recent reports, Professor Veshinski, who as Public Prosecutor of the R.S.F.S.R. prosecuted in the Moscow Trial, has been appointed deputy to Comrade Akulov as Procurator of the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R.

All O.G.P.U. officials and troops are granted extraordinary privileges. They have their own co-operative stores, where food and commodities are always available, even when the ordinary workers' co-operatives are compelled to announce that they have nothing to sell. They have reserved seats, and, frequently, reserved compartments on every train, and the central coupé of the sleeping coaches on the International Sleeping Cars is almost invariably reserved for senior O.G.P.U. officials. The privileges which O.G.P.U. officials and secret agents enjoy are not infrequently used to induce Russian citizens to join their service as secret informers.

The O.G.P.U. does not allow its hundreds of thousands of victims to remain entirely idle. The total number of Soviet citizens who are now working under the supervision of the O.G.P.U. probably reaches many millions, of whom three-quarters at least are "employed" in compulsory labour settlements such as those on the recently completed White Sea Canal, where returns show that nearly a quarter of a million detained citizens were compelled to work.

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When Mr. Litvinov, speaking at the World Economic Conference in London, claimed that the U.S.S.R. had no unemployment, apparently he was not aware of the unemployment which is resulting from the large reductions in works and factory staffs which have been made during recent months, and he discredited entirely the number of citizens unemployed, and only partially employed, in the prisons and detention camps of the O.G.P.U., who alone probably comprise as many as the total registered unemployed in Great Britain.

Peasants and kulaks are, as a general rule, drafted more or less straight away into the large construction camps where their services can be used. The White Sea Canal and Kuznetzstroi, may be cited as examples of great constructional works in which the O.G.P.U. have provided the majority of the technical supervision and labour employed.

Engineers, technicians and other educated people who fall into the hands of the O.G.P.U. are, in most cases, submitted to some weeks or months of solitary confinement before the subject of working is introduced. During this period of solitary confinement they are frequently subjected to protracted examinations, and are threatened, even although they may not know for what "crime" they have been arrested. The O.G.P.U. openly state that the object of this preliminary period is to "break" their victims. Finally, they are drafted into technical and special planning bureaux, where they work under escort and constant supervision. These technical bureaux employing arrested engineers are a definite part of the Soviet authorities' organization. In more

than one case I have been called upon to supply technical information to engineers working under conditions of this nature. O.G.P.U. officials have shown me technical periodicals, written and published in their bureaux, and I had amongst my papers in Moscow a publication entitled *Bulletin of Special Technical Construction Bureau of the O.G.P.U.*, No. 26, which had a limited circulation in 1931 and 1932, and which constituted an excellent summary of modern developments in heavy rolling-mill drives based on the very latest world practice. This publication was "accidentally" left on my desk by a man who, I now suspect, was an O.G.P.U. agent.

In conclusion, one word of praise for the O.G.P.U. It is unquestionably the best organized and best disciplined force in the U.S.S.R., and its officers and men are obviously trained to exhibit calmness, tolerance and politeness. Although one sees soldiers of the Red Army unshaven and carelessly dressed, and with unclean boots, I have never seen an O.G.P.U. official unshaven or dressed discredibly, even in the most outlying districts. In every corner of the U.S.S.R. one meets the officers of the O.G.P.U., and, no matter where it is, the foreigner who applies to the local O.G.P.U. authorities for help will be received with politeness and get the best possible assistance that the most powerful force in the U.S.S.R. can render. On many occasions I have felt profoundly grateful to the O.G.P.U. for assistance when travelling.

Finally, I would say that, even when I entered the dreaded Lubianka as a prisoner, the officers

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and *prison* officials with whom I came into contact showed me the utmost consideration.

The nature of my cross-examination by Belogorski made it necessary for him to continue questioning me long after he knew that I was worn out, but even he was always a disciplined, firm and studiously polite officer of the O.G.P.U.

Somewhat closely associated with the O.G.P.U. there exists the Commissariat of Workmen's and Peasants' Inspection (R.K.I.). This body reports to the Sovnarcom and Tsik in the same manner as that in which the O.G.P.U. reports. Its duties are to control the activities of all State organizations and officials responsible for carrying out the Government's plans. It has its officially appointed agents in every large State organization. Any irregularities, mismanagement, or failure to maintain the programme laid down in the Government's "Control Figures," are investigated by the R.K.I., whose activities are almost more feared by Government officials than those of the O.G.P.U. The duties of the latter are confined to combating real and alleged counter-revolution and criminal plots, whereas the duties of the R.K.I. finish with correcting inefficiency, negligence and incompetence. The R.K.I. have no police or soldiery of their own, and when they find it necessary to regard a case which they have under investigation as one involving counter-revolutionary or criminal activities they hand the matter over to the O.G.P.U.



## CHAPTER XXI

### “THE MOSCOW ARRESTS,”

MARCH 11TH, 1933

IN JANUARY 1933 it was evident to a great majority of the population of the U.S.S.R. that the first Five Year Plan had not completely fulfilled expectations. There were, of course, individual industries and works which justifiably claimed to have fulfilled, and more than completed, the Plan, but as a general whole, including agriculture, the Plan had not justified its promoters' optimistic predictions. That such a failure should be attributed, to a certain extent, to the action of wreckers and counter-revolutionary elements was, under the circumstances existing in U.S.S.R., natural ; and whispers of this were heard long before Stalin's speech of January 7th, 1933. On this date, Stalin concluded his review of the alleged successes of the first Five Year Plan with a warning against the counter-revolutionary elements, which he claimed were still making every endeavour to bring about the downfall of the Soviet authority. To quote his own words, he said :

“As a result of carrying out the Five Year Plan in the sphere of industry, agriculture and trade we have strengthened the principles of Socialism in all spheres of national economy, and have expelled the capitalist elements from them.”

He went on to say that "the last remnants of the dying classes; the manufacturers and their supporters, the merchants and their henchmen, the ex-nobles and priests, and kulaks and their supporters, ex-White officers and policemen, ex-police officers and gendarmes . . . etc. . . . carried with them a feeling of hatred towards the Soviet Government—a feeling of burning enmity towards the new forms of economy, life and culture.

"These gentlemen are no longer able to make a direct attack against the Soviet Government. They and their classes have made such attacks several times but they were defeated and dispersed. . . . They are doing as much mischief as they can, working silently underground. They set fire to warehouses and break machines. They organize sabotage . . . etc. . . ."

In invoking the Party to fight against these enemies of the Soviet Union, Stalin said the fight "must be waged using all measures and means placed at our command by the laws of the Soviet Government," and added: "A strong and powerful dictatorship of the proletariat, that is what we must have now in order to shatter the last remnants of the dying classes and to frustrate their felonious designs."

After reference to the fact that the "last remnants of the hostile classes were being expelled from industrial undertakings, and the kulaks were being routed," he added, "and we have prepared the ground for their destruction . . . the task is to expel these remnants of the past from our enterprises and institutions, and to render them utterly innocuous.

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“We must bear in mind that the growth of the power of the Soviet State will increase the resistance of the last remnants of the dying classes. It is precisely because they are dying and living their last days that they will pass from one form of attack to another : to sharper forms of attack. They will appeal to the backward strata of the population and mobilize them against the Soviet Union. There is no mischief and slander that these remnants of the past will not commit against the Soviet Government and around which they will not try to mobilize the backward elements. . . . Of course there is nothing terrible in this, but we must bear all this in mind if we want to put an end to these elements quickly and without great loss. That is why revolutionary vigilance is the quality the Bolsheviks particularly require at the present time.”

The great bulk of the thinking people of U.S.S.R. were, however, sceptical as to whether the explanation of many of the failures in the fulfilment of the Five Year Plan was to be found in the alleged actions of counter-revolutionaries. It appeared to them much more probable that the set-backs and failures could be attributed to inherent weaknesses in the Plan, inexperience, lack of technical assistance and interference of political influences in dealing with industrial problems, etc. It was therefore essential that such sceptical criticism should be silenced by the “revealing” of counter-revolutionary and wrecking plots. Doubtless Stalin himself, and his associates, desired that definite evidence should be produced proving the existence of the wrecking acts of alleged enemies of the Soviet to which he had

referred in his speech. In any case the speech was an obvious public challenge to the O.G.P.U. to show their mettle. There are indications that the O.G.P.U. foresaw the probability of Stalin saying what he did on January 7th, and commenced preparing the "frame-up," which was to prove his assertions, some two or three weeks before the speech was actually delivered. This, however, is not in any way surprising, because the public utterances of the Party leaders are as a general rule the subject of discussion by the Party political executive during their preparation.

Stalin's speech definitely called for action. The O.G.P.U. were not slow in discovering and revealing the existence of numerous plots proving the words of the "Dictator."

On March 11th—the day on which the British engineers were arrested—they announced the discovery of counter-revolution and sabotage plots affecting the Government's agricultural proposals, and officially stated that these counter-revolutionary acts had resulted in the extreme punishment being meted out to thirty-five guilty officials. Other plots were discovered, affecting the medical profession and certain specialist industries, to which little public attention abroad was given. Obviously a super-plot was also necessary to demonstrate the truth of Stalin's assertions to supporters of the Soviet Government in the outside world. A plot which would affect the oil industries of Baku, the coal and metal industries of the Ukraine, the cotton industries of Ivanovo-Vosnesensk, the industrial areas of the Urals, Moscow and Leningrad themselves, the Kremlin,

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and finally the efficiency of the country's military strength would provide an ideal case for a public trial staged in Moscow with all the ceremony and trappings which had characterized the great trials which have taken place in Moscow during recent years.

One section of the activities of the Commissariat of Heavy Industries immediately suggested itself, i.e. electric power supply, to which incidentally Lenin himself had placed almost excessive importance. Doubtless the O.G.P.U. were a little in difficulty to find the co-ordinating link which extended the plots to districts so widely separated as those named above, but if there existed any desire whatsoever to introduce foreigners into the scheme the Metropolitan Vickers Electrical Company's erection and service organization would immediately suggest itself. This was one of the very few organizations which had engineers working in electric power supply undertakings in every important industrial area of the U.S.S.R.

The relations existing between Great Britain and the U.S.S.R. had been, to a certain limited extent, strained by the notification of denunciation of the temporary Trade Agreement which Great Britain's arrangements with her Dominions at Ottawa had made imperative. This doubtless strengthened the decision of the O.G.P.U. to include British engineers in the “plot.”

On January 25th, the O.G.P.U. had proceeded sufficiently far with their plans as to find it necessary to decoy my secretary from the office at 3 p.m. in the afternoon. Without giving her an opportunity

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to put on her hat or her overshoes, they literally dragged her into a waiting motor-car and drove her off to the O.G.P.U. Headquarters in the Lubianski Square. Here she was subjected to the usual procedure associated with commitment to the prison cells, including being undressed, searched and deprived of all loose personal property. Later she was taken to the examining authorities, and what there occurred can only be conjectured. That evening I communicated with London by telephone, reporting what had occurred, and I afterwards ascertained that my doing so was largely instrumental in Miss Kutusova being released at ten o'clock on the following morning.

Miss Kutusova is a bright, clever and extraordinarily efficient woman, thirty-eight years of age. I met her first in 1925, when she was secretary to the chief electrical engineer of Volchovstroï. Two years later, on the completion of Volchovstroï, she found herself without employment and joined the staff of the Metropolitan Vickers Company as my private secretary. In this capacity she had served for nearly six years when her career was so abruptly broken. In addition to her duties in the company's office, she had helped me extensively with technical works which I had published from time to time, and I had come to respect her as a friend, and an extremely industrious colleague.

The exhausted and terrified woman who collapsed in my office at ten o'clock on the morning of January 26th was a spectre of the girl who had been dragged to the O.G.P.U. Headquarters eighteen hours earlier. What had occurred she would not,

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and probably dare not, say. That she had written much was evident from the ink- and pen-marks which I noticed on her fingers. Of one thing I feel certain, and that is from that time onwards she was forced, under threat of serious consequences to herself, and probably to her relatives, to act as an agent of the O.G.P.U., and in all probability she was forced to give them certain of the information which later enabled them to “frame up” the case which they ultimately presented to the Court. After my own short experience at the Lubianka, I shall never bear Miss Kutusova the slightest ill will for whatever she was forced into saying or writing. My only sentiment towards her is now, as it has been throughout, one of intense sympathy. She is a loyal citizen of the U.S.S.R., and has done nothing against the interests of her own country. She has my profoundest respect, coupled with gratitude for all that she has done to help me personally during the last six years.

Miss Kutusova's arrest, however, caused me considerable alarm. Obviously the O.G.P.U. were interesting themselves in the activities of the Metropolitan Vickers Company's engineers more keenly than at any previous time, but for what reason I could not guess. Two days later, other information came to me, indicating that a careful watch was being made of my own movements and those of several of our engineers : consequently I sought an interview with Mr. Ozerski, the Soviet Trade Representative in London, who was then in Moscow. Although he reassured me that I had no need to be alarmed at the action taken by the

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O.G.P.U., nevertheless I considered it advisable to hasten my visit to London to report the matter to my chiefs, and hence I left Moscow on February 6th, 1933, for England. Mr. Ozerski had reached London before me. I met him on February 10th, and had from him a firm assurance that he had discussed the matter with the chiefs of the O.G.P.U., and that Miss Kutusova's arrest had been the work of a department of the O.G.P.U. unknown to its chiefs. He added that the O.G.P.U. had nothing against the company and nothing against me personally, nor as far as he knew against any of my colleagues. As this assurance was given in the presence of the chairman of the Metropolitan Vickers Electrical Company, I accepted it as being sufficiently good to let the matter drop. I returned to Moscow about three weeks later, arriving there on March 7th.

The next act in the terrible drama occurred on March 11th, at 9.15 p.m., when Mr. Thornton and I were dining with two guests—representatives of a large engineering company with extensive British and American interests.

We had finished dinner, and were seated in the lounge, when suddenly a door was thrown open and, almost before we could realize that anything unusual was occurring, eight stalwart O.G.P.U. officers and N.C.O.s were in the room. They were led by a dark young officer of short stature, who, it afterwards transpired, was actually one of the highest officials of the much-dreaded organization.

"Is anyone armed?" came the question, rapped out like a command. A negative answer resulted





ICE FLOES PASSING OVER THE VOLCHOVSTROI DAM



SHTEROVKA POWER HOUSE IN THE DONETZ BASIN



in the N.C.O.s rebuttoning their revolver pouches. Obviously the raiding party had been sufficiently misinformed as to anticipate armed resistance. The intruders then inspected the passports of our guests, who were constrained to sit still and not speak throughout the whole of the ensuing proceedings, which lasted some five hours.

Comrade Feldman, deputy chief of the Economic Department of the O.G.P.U. then took charge of the proceedings. He showed Mr. Thornton and myself warrants for the search of our quarters and our arrest. A good-natured, heavily built N.C.O., smartly uniformed with Sam Browne belt, revolver and the special leather map case invariably carried by warrant officers of the O.G.P.U., was summoned, and given instructions that he was not to let me go more than one pace away from him until further orders—instructions he did his utmost to comply with during the remainder of the evening.

On going up to my own suite of rooms, I observed, from the windows, the elaborate precautions which the O.G.P.U. had made for the raid. Five large cars and two lorries were in the yard. It afterwards transpired that the estimate I then made, that fifty officers and men were involved, was low—actually I believe eighty officials were detailed to arrest us and to search our rooms that night. Physically, and in general appearance and smartness, the raiding party were about the best group of men I have seen in the U.S.S.R., and had obviously been specially chosen for the occasion.

The search was as thorough as imagination could make it. After about two hours, I began to realize

what an extraordinary amount of unnecessary rubbish I had in my room. Letters from my little boy when he was four years of age, with a drawing of a "puffer," required explanation, apparently to prove that it was not a plan of a Soviet munition factory.

My botanical notes created great interest. My own first literary effort—a description of the building of the cheese-factory at Low Garth in Taranaki, written at the age of eight, had to be explained personally to Comrade Feldman. Strange to say, actual details of some of the great works with which the Metropolitan Vickers Electrical Company has been associated in the Soviet Union during recent years were entirely disregarded. My correspondence with the British income tax authorities created great interest, because the envelopes, which I have adopted the German habit of filing with the letters, bear the words, "On His Britannic Majesty's Service." With their broken knowledge of English, the O.G.P.U. officials probably thought that they had at last found the alleged secret correspondence with those whom they imagined directed the activities of British secret agents.

After my own rooms had been searched, I was called upon to accompany the searching party of six men whilst the dining-room, lounge and other general rooms were investigated. In the lounge a striking incident occurred. I might explain that at the last annual Armistice Day dinner which I have made a practice of organizing every year since I have lived in the U.S.S.R., and to which every available British ex-Service man has been invited,

it was suggested that portraits of H.M. the King and H.M. the Queen should be hung in our lounge alongside my Union Jack, which has always been displayed wherever it has been my lot to live abroad. Rather poor reproductions of portraits of their Majesties had been brought out ; therefore I had decided to endeavour to secure better pictures, and meanwhile the original ones had been wrapped in tissue paper and placed in a drawer. These were discovered and shown to Comrade Feldman, who wrapped the portraits up again personally, with care almost amounting to reverence, and, replacing them in the drawer, remarked to me : “ That is all right—that is understandable.”

At 1 a.m. the search was complete, and Comrade Feldman told me to prepare to accompany him to the Lubianka Headquarters. I began to throw a few articles into a suit-case, and then it occurred to me to play for time, to think things over, before leaving the house : hence I asked permission to take a bath. After some hesitation, Feldman agreed, and I had my bath, during which the heavily built and kindly faced N.C.O. kept at one pace distant from me, except for a moment when I splashed his revolver case and he moved away to dry it. This bath gave me time to remember a few instructions I had to give before being taken away to prison.

The drive to the O.G.P.U. Headquarters, in the Lubianski Square in Moscow, through the refreshing and invigorating frosty air, created a welcome break in the night's events. On arrival at the Lubianka, I caught a momentary glance of my colleague, Mr. Thornton, and also of my secretary,

Miss Kutusova. This was my first intimation that she, too, had been arrested. After a slight delay, I was taken up five flights of stairs and left to wait in a small office guarded by a very young official.

Before being taken to prison, I asked Comrade Feldman to assure me that the action being taken was at the instance of the Presidium of the O.G.P.U., and that it was not a departmental act. He assured me that what was being done was dictated from even higher circles, and added that the O.G.P.U. itself would not embark on such a serious step without the assent of the Government.

I also told him of my interview with Mr. Ozerski in London, and what had transpired at that interview. From the manner in which Feldman received my communication, I am prepared to give Mr. Ozerski credit for having acted in perfectly good faith in saying what he did in London. He had obviously not been taken into the confidence of the O.G.P.U. in Moscow.

At about 3 a.m., I was taken along to a small lift, and instructed to enter it. For some reason or another, the first journey, down five floors, in this lift alarmed me more than anything else which occurred during my short stay at the Lubianka. I subsequently found that my colleagues were similarly impressed by this small sheet-iron box into which one was locked alone, and relatively slowly lowered five floors. Perhaps our alarm was because we had none of us realized we were on the fifth floor to start with, and imagined we were being lowered into one of the subterranean dungeons with which rumour accredits the dreaded Lubianka.

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However, the lift only dropped me down to ground level, and thence I had to ascend four flights of stairs to the prison receiving-room. The temperature of this receiving-room was approximately that of a Turkish bath. I was made to strip naked, and everything which could possibly be used for suicidal purposes, such as braces, tie, collar, studs, etc., was taken from me.

Number ninety-six cell, to which I was then conducted, was a clean and fairly large cell, approximately fourteen feet long and nine feet wide. It had colour-washed plastered walls, a central-heating radiator and a fair-sized barred window, in front of which a shield was fixed, preventing any view being obtained. The furniture consisted of a table, and a short iron bedstead on which there was a very thin mattress. No chair was provided. One sheet and one blanket were handed into me, but no pillow was allowed. A strong electric light was kept burning throughout the night. Guards raised a small shutter, and peeped through a peep-hole in the door to observe me, approximately every ten minutes throughout the night, and the click of this shutter as it opened was singularly disturbing. At about 6.30 a.m. I was aroused from a half sleep into which I had dropped by the door being opened. A dustpan and brush were pushed in to me, and orders, given in a whisper, to clean out my cell. It may be emphasized here that every precaution is taken to ensure silence in this solitary confinement prison, and consequently all conversation is carried on in whispered tones. The greatest care is exercised to prevent prisoners seeing one another when being

conducted from one part of the building to another ; the guards, being forbidden to speak, have a habit of snapping their fingers twice to signify the fact that they are approaching with a prisoner. Should it occur that they find two prisoners are about to meet in a corridor, the one who is returning to his cell is constrained to stand with his face to the wall whilst the other passes him.

At what I assumed was 7.30 a.m. I heard the keys turning in the cell doors as warders proceeded down the corridors visiting each cell. At last my turn came, and it proved to be a soldier with an enormous kettle of liquid which he described as tea. I poured some of this into my own tea kettle, and he departed. In a few minutes time, again I heard the cells being unlocked. This time, a white overalled woman handed me five slices of black bread. I had hardly placed these on my table when the key grated in the door once more, and I was instructed to follow my guard to the lavatories, where I was able to wash, although throughout the time which I was in the Lubyanka Prison I was never given an opportunity to shave.

After a further short interval I was taken from my cell, and escorted by an armed soldier to the examining department of the O.G.P.U., where the much-feared Belogorski himself commenced my examination. He was not quite the type of man I had expected to find him. Although obviously a man capable of making his strong personality and will felt in his dealings with his victims, he was, nevertheless, not a man of any education, and was certainly not well-informed beyond his own particular sphere.



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The details of my subsequent examination have already been the subject of much attention in the Press and elsewhere. I was not charged with anything definite, but it was obvious, from the questions asked, what the nature of the charges which the O.G.P.U. had in mind was. They suggested that I was an agent of the British Secret Service. This I strenuously denied for several hours, until the examiners ceased accusing me of such activities. I was then accused of military spying, but this charge was likewise dropped after an hour of denials. The method of cross-examination employed never included physical torture. Hypnotism and drugs were not used on me, but my examination was continued uninterruptedly from breakfast-time until approximately 2 a.m. the following morning. I had two meals brought in, which Belogorski himself shared with me, and we continued talking during the meals. These meals were good and included pressed caviare, salad, soup, roast duck and a sweet. They had been brought in from a neighbouring communal dining-room. It is true that the subject of conversation was changed during the meals, and Belogorski appeared to treat me with exaggerated civility and consideration for my comfort and welfare. Towards late evening I began to get very tired. Belogorski obviously knew this, and endeavoured to persuade me to write a statement regarding the behaviour of certain machines which the Metropolitan Vickers Electrical Company had supplied. Actually these machines had done exceedingly good work, but some defects had, in fact, occurred, largely due to

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very bad operating conditions, for which, of course, the Russians themselves are responsible. Finally, I dictated a statement to me in Russian, which I wrote in English. Almost every phrase which I dictated I disputed, altered and finally wrote in a form which I thought would satisfy him and not harm my employers' high reputation. At midnight I felt that my nerve was going. I was exhausted after the previous night's search and arrest and a very long day's intensive examination. My tongue and mouth so dry that they gave considerable discomfort. My lips twitched in a way I never knew before. It was a hard mental effort to resist writing exactly what Belogorski dictated, but in any case, before I left the room that night I wrote one or two paragraphs which I greatly regret having consented to write. I can only attribute my weakness in having done so to the exhausted physical and mental condition to which I had been reduced after a very long day's examination in the O.G.P.U. following a sleepless night. At a certain stage, I succeeded, after considerable argument, in inducing the Public Prosecutor of the R.S.F.S.R., Vishinski, to allow me to withdraw the statement I had been persuaded to make in these paragraphs.

After having experienced that mental exhaustion and lived through the evening of March 12th, 1933, Belogorski and his colleagues, I understand, can realize how it is that his victims can be induced to make all manner of confessions, even without resort to the practices—hypnotism, drugs, physical torture—which the O.G.P.U. are accustomed with employing. In my case, threats and

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definitely used, although, during the first day of my examination, Belogorski pretended that he was not threatening *me* at all. He said he was only telling me what might occur if the O.G.P.U. took upon itself to act.

Some time between 2 and 3 a.m. the following morning I was returned to my cell, and slept till aroused for the usual routine. On my second day the procedure was much the same as that which has already been described. One incident, however, in that long day of denials and argument is worth recording, as it was my first indication of what I know now is a favourite examining method employed by the O.G.P.U.—i.e. personal confrontation. I was being accused of having a secret fund for spying and wrecking work. I had denied any such thing for nearly two hours. Belogorski said, “But we have all the evidence to prove it—for instance, we could bring your own secretary, Anna Sergievna (Miss Kutusova), here, and she will testify that you had such a fund.” I rather welcomed the idea of being able to refute, in her presence, the statement which my secretary had obviously been forced to make, and hence I asked them to bring her in. I also thought it might give me an opportunity of passing her a word of sympathy and encouragement. When Belogorski saw that I welcomed the idea, he endeavoured to dissuade me from asking for the confrontation. He said that if I refuted her statement at an official confrontation it would not improve the position in which she was now unlucky enough to find herself. However, I still endeavoured to insist on the

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meeting, but after half-an-hour's wait, and during Belogorski's absence from the room, his assistant, Rejevksi, told me that Anna Sergievna was now sleeping, adding that the prison authorities did not wish her to be disturbed. At this stage, Belogorski entered the room, and stated that he had just seen Miss Kutusova and she thanked me for a message of greetings which I had previously asked Belogorski to give her. The words in which she sent her message made it clear to me that he really had seen Miss Kutusova. Obviously, he had not been to the prison to see her, and she was in a neighbouring room, probably suffering a similar examination to my own. In short, Belogorski would not risk confronting me with my own secretary. Towards evening, I was put back into my cell for an hour. Belogorski pretended that this break in the proceedings was an act of consideration, because, he said, he could see I was tired, but the real explanation lay in the fact that his wife had been on the telephone several times during the afternoon and had begged him to come home for an evening meal.

Shortly after being taken back to the examining department of the O.G.P.U., the proceedings were suddenly interrupted by the entrance of Mironov—one of the chiefs of the inquisitors of the O.G.P.U.—who strode into the room and whispered a few words to Belogorski and his colleagues, both of whom immediately arose and rushed off. I was left with a young officer to guard me.

At 11.30, Belogorski returned, and, having read through a statement which had been prepared covering the day's interviews, he became very

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agitated, and, pacing up and down the room as he spoke, he told me I was holding back information and that what I had said was valueless, adding that if I persisted in this attitude the O.G.P.U. would have to regard me as a criminal and act accordingly. Still pacing the room, he then said : “ If the O.G.P.U. act, they will act in such a manner that you will cease to be of any use either to the Soviet Union or to Great Britain.” To this I made no reply. Having reached the far end of the room, he suddenly swung round on his heels, and, shooting his head forward, said with raised voice : “ Do you understand what that means ? ” To which question I replied : “ I understand, and I am prepared.”

There was a moment’s silence. Belogorski paced the room twice, and then said : “ That means you understand ” ; and placing himself on a chair beside me he put his hand on my shoulder, and added, with a note of decision in his voice, “ All right.” There was another pause, during which I wondered what was coming next, because, despite his threat, he did not seem unfriendly. He proceeded : “ During the last hour and a half, your case has been put before the Collegium of the O.G.P.U., and our Chief himself is convinced you are an honest fellow and has given orders for your immediate release, but you must give a written undertaking not to leave Moscow.” I asked him : “ Do you mean Menjinski ? ” To which question he nodded his head in assent. I was rather sceptical about this announcement—I certainly did not believe I was really to be liberated—and began to conjecture what this latest move really meant.

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However, my scepticism on this occasion was unfounded. I was hastened along corridors to the office of the Commandant of the Prison. He received me as a guest—shook hands, and waved me to a chair. Junior officers were despatched to the cells, and to the prisoners' reception-room, to get my various effects, and one of the O.G.P.U. examiners appeared with all the papers and documents which had been taken from my rooms at the *datcha* during the original search. The Commandant himself assisted me to pack my bag, and, escorted by him and the examining officers, I descended to an O.G.P.U. closed car which took me to my home. On the way out of the prison, I met one of my colleagues, Mr. Nordwall, who was also being released.

Arriving at the *datcha*, my first act was to shave, after which the whole household assembled round the samovar and sat there until 4 a.m., comparing notes and putting to each other the eternal question, "Why had the Soviet authorities embarked upon this unjustified and perfectly astonishing course? Why had this attack been made on men who had numbered themselves amongst those who had done their utmost for many years to assist the Soviet Union in its relationships with Great Britain?"

## CHAPTER XXII

### “THE MOSCOW TRIAL,” APRIL

12TH - 19TH, 1933

AT EIGHT O'CLOCK on the morning of March 14th, I reported at the British Embassy in Moscow, where I was immediately received by Sir Esmond Ovey, and was able to recount to him and Mr. William Strang the story of what had taken place during my two days' detention at the Lubianka. The gist of what I told Sir Esmond Ovey was conveyed to the British Foreign Office in the despatches which have since been published in a White Paper.

During the days that followed, Sir Esmond Ovey was considerably disturbed by the apparent lack of desire on the part of the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs in Moscow to discuss the whole matter frankly with him. I am inclined to think that at this time the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs was so much in the dark as to what the O.G.P.U. had actually done that they were, in fact, unable to discuss the matter. Such information as the O.G.P.U. had passed to them led them to believe that several of the arrested British engineers had made confessions which left their guilt beyond doubt. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that little headway could be made.

Sir Esmond Ovey visited Mr. Litvinoff on March 16th, and laid stress on the unfortunate impression

the arrests, and the delay in dealing with the matter had made in Great Britain, and told him of Mr. Baldwin's statement in Parliament, which incidentally had already been given prominence in the Moscow newspapers. Mr. Litvinoff replied that he did not question the sincerity of Mr. Baldwin's conviction regarding the innocence of the prisoners, but that the Soviet authorities could not release the engineers, on the basis of Mr. Baldwin's statement, without properly investigating the case and considering the information and evidence which were at their disposal, and which, moreover, actually included confessions of certain of the engineers themselves.

The Soviet Commissar of Foreign Affairs also felt it necessary to justify the long examination to which I had been subjected on March 12th and 13th. He said that under normal circumstances the examination of Mr. Nordwall and myself would "perhaps have continued for several weeks," but that the examining authorities had not spared themselves in examining us for long periods during these two days. He asked Sir Esmond Ovey to believe that my long examination had been resorted to out of consideration for my personal convenience, and he added that he had asked the examining authorities of the O.G.P.U. to hasten the examination of the engineers still in prison.

On March 29th, we learned that the British Government had decided to ask Sir Esmond Ovey to return to London for consultation. That the Foreign Office should have arranged for his return did not surprise me greatly. Apart from the obvious



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advantage of having the benefit of his first-hand knowledge at the counsel tables in London, his position had been made difficult in Moscow, due to the rudeness of Mr. Litvinoff's outburst at the interview between himself and Sir Esmond Ovey on March 28th. During this interview, Sir Esmond had made it clear to Mr. Litvinoff that the British Government intended to put a Bill before Parliament, to enable it to impose an embargo on Russian imports to Great Britain, should it be deemed necessary to do so, in order to secure fair treatment for myself and my colleagues. In Mr. Litvinoff's own words, reported in a Russian Red paper which was subsequently issued, he had said to Sir Esmond Ovey, "Permit me, Sir Esmond, to tell you that even if such methods of diplomacy might perhaps be successful, let us say, in Mexico, they are doomed, in advance, to complete failure in the U.S.S.R., and the sooner you realize this the better it will be for all." In view of Sir Esmond Ovey's long and close association with Mexico, of which Mr. Litvinoff was fully aware, this uncalled-for remark was a definite insult.

When the train for Western Europe drew out of Moscow at 10.45 p.m. on March 30th, all who stood on the platform to bid farewell to Great Britain's first Ambassador to the U.S.S.R. felt that they were losing from among them a man who knew the general position in the country thoroughly, who knew every detail of the engineers' case, and who knew well the personalities of the men at the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs in Moscow. It was indeed not surprising that the Government at home

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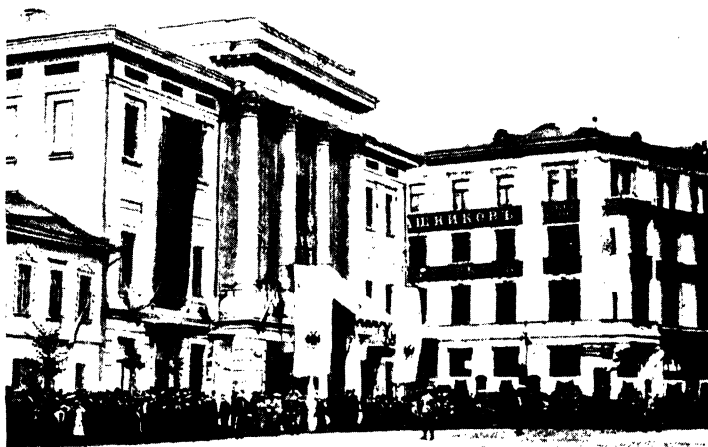
desired to consult such an authority at first-hand, but his departure left us with heavy hearts. We had, however, one consolation, and that was that we already knew the sterling qualities of Mr. Strang, who remained as *chargé d'affaires*. We realized that he was already devoting his undivided attention to our case, and putting his whole immense energy into the endeavour he was making to bring the matter to a happier conclusion than that which it ultimately reached on April 19th, 1933.

According to normal procedure, in such cases as that which drew the world's attention to the travesty of justice which was enacted in the Blue Hall of the old Nobles' Club in Moscow in April 1933, the initial examination is conducted by the O.G.P.U. examining authorities, who, having induced their prisoners to sign statements which they consider sufficiently damning to secure a conviction, hand the whole matter over to the Public Prosecutor of the Republic. This official then re-examines the accused in the presence of O.G.P.U. senior inquisitors. In the case of prisoners still in custody (and, therefore, usually) this second examination takes place actually in the O.G.P.U. buildings.

The suggestion that the Public Prosecutor is an impartial authority entirely detached from the O.G.P.U. has been conclusively disproved by the experiences of my colleagues and myself in Moscow. During my own re-examination in the Public Prosecutor's Chambers I was asked more questions by Comrade Feldman, the Deputy Head of the Economic Department of the O.G.P.U., and



THE "LOG CABIN," IN WHICH THE AUTHOR AND HIS COLLEAGUES WERE LIVING AT THE TIME OF THEIR ARREST



THE HALL OF THE NOBLES IN MOSCOW

This photograph was taken on the occasion of the Tsar's last visit there in 1914. It was in this building that the Moscow Trial took place



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incidentally the man who actually arrested me, than I was by the Public Prosecutor, Vishinski, himself. The Public Prosecutor, having satisfied himself that the case is one which should go forward for trial, then prepares a full indictment, and hands the matter over to the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R. which according to the constitution of the U.S.S.R. has to be specially instructed by the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee in each instance when called upon to deal with a case of this kind. In the recent trial the charges were of a technical character, and therefore a Commission of Technical Experts was appointed to advise and assist in drawing up the indictment.

According to recognized legal procedure, the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R. should have a preliminary sitting, at which it performs a function similar to that of a Grand Jury in Great Britain, and, prior to bringing the case before itself in open Court, determines whether or not it presents a true bill. The British accused and their counsel had no grounds for believing that this procedure had been followed in the recent trial.

On paper the above-outlined procedure would appear reasonably fair, but, during the investigations preceding our trial in Moscow, the authorities, having set themselves the task of framing up a case, had no concrete evidence on which to start their investigations, and consequently both the O.G.P.U. and the Public Prosecutor found themselves forced to resort to grossly unfair methods and deliberate misrepresentation in order to prepare a

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case which they considered strong enough to put before the Supreme Court. They obviously intended "fishing" until they succeeded in deceiving or frightening some, or all, of us into making confessions which would incriminate both ourselves and others.

Although my liberation from the Lubianka at midnight on March 13th-14th had been subject to a condition that I should not leave Moscow, I had allowed myself to be persuaded that the consistent efforts which I had made for many years to assist the Soviet Government in its relationship with Great Britain would constitute sufficiently strong ground for preventing the O.G.P.U. from framing up a false accusation against me in the Moscow Courts. I was therefore not a little surprised that at 3 p.m. on March 25th an O.G.P.U. official—the same young man who had guarded me on the first night of my arrest—appeared in my office with a warrant for me to report at the Public Prosecutor's Office at 8.30 p.m. on the same evening, "in the capacity of one of the Accused in Case No. B7D."

It was on this occasion that I first met both Vishinski and Roginski. Vishinski is by far the most educated man with whom I came into contact during the case. He is a very different type from the O.G.P.U. investigators. He was originally a Professor of Economics and Law, and, during the régime of Kerenski and afterwards, he held the position of Rector of Moscow University. He is a good linguist and a pleasant conversationalist. During some part of the first evening I spent in his chambers he read *The Times* and other foreign

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newspapers whilst Roginski carried on my examination. I did not dislike Vishinski, and I imagine that outside the Moscow Court he would prove to be a well-informed and cultured man of the old intelligentsia, but on the other hand he is a man of extreme political views who has thrown himself heart and soul into the Communist cause, thus winning for himself the high position in the State which he occupies.

Roginski on the other hand is a younger man, more of the type of those I had met in the O.G.P.U., but without that polite manner which the O.G.P.U. officers are trained to exhibit. He has the face and manner of a bully, and his methods during my examination and in the Court did not belie his appearance.

My examination in Vishinski's chambers occupied ten hours in all, on three successive days. Having read the comments in *The Times* regarding my long examination at the O.G.P.U. he was scrupulously careful to ensure that there should be no complaints regarding methods of examination employed in his own chambers. On the other hand, the protocols of this ten hours' examination contained no single statement that Vishinski and his colleagues thought worth while referring to in the Court proceedings with the exception of one brief reference in the indictment and one remark made by Vishinski in his final speech for the Prosecution.

It was perfectly clear that the main object of this re-examination by Vishinski, and his assistant Roginski, was to strengthen the case the authorities had demanded should be prepared. Personally, I was urged by Vishinski himself to make and sign

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statements which were untrue. I am certain he knew he was urging me to make false statements, although when I told him he was doing so, he said, "Put that right out of your mind—here I only want the truth." My statement was not referred to during the investigation in the Court, because it did not incriminate either my employers, my colleagues or myself, but constituted a clean answer to all questions put to me by Vishinski and his associates who examined me and retracted an unfortunate and unfounded admission I had been induced to make when under examination by the O.G.P.U., to which admission reference has already been made.

The only document signed by me in the Public Prosecutor's chamber to be actually produced in Court was my denial of guilt when the preliminary indictment was handed to me. I had been utterly astonished when this preliminary indictment, accusing me of spying and wrecking activities and bribery, was first read to me, and, in the stress of the moment, had allowed chief investigator Sheinin to write my denial of the charges for me in Russian, and I had signed it without reading it sufficiently carefully. Although I had made a lengthy statement to the Public Prosecutor, which had been put on paper by Sheinin himself, affirming that a transaction with an engineer named Dolgov had been a loan and not a present, nevertheless, Sheinin succeeded in making the first paragraph of my denial of the charge finish with the words: "Inasmuch that I assisted to write off the amount—i.e. 3,000 roubles—which was given as a present to Dolgov,



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etc.,” whereas my intention was that he should have written, “Inasmuch as that I assisted to write off, as a present, the amount, i.e. 3,000 roubles—which was loaned to Dolgov, etc.”

Later I was called upon to translate this document into English, and was also asked to sign my translation as being correct. I now realize that this was a trick to secure the document in my own handwriting for reproducing in facsimile in the English verbatim report of the trial. When making this translation, I pointed out to Sheinin that the Russian had been written in such a way as to include a wrong use of the words “as a present,” and I wished to correct this in my translation, but he assured me that this was unnecessary, because this document was really “only a formality” and would not be used. Moreover, he added that the form of the actual transaction between Mr. Thornton and Engineer Dolgov had been made sufficiently clear in my main statement already referred to above. My colleague, Mr. Nordwall, was present during this conversation with Sheinin.

Detailed reference to this particular incident has been made, first, because it clearly illustrates the methods used by the O.G.P.U. and the judicial authorities in Moscow to trick their victims into making and signing statements which can be unfairly used against them, and, secondly, because it was on the strength of this document, which I was assured was only a formality, that I was subsequently convicted of being an accomplice in a alleged bribery transaction.

*The Commission of Technical Experts, to which*

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reference has been made above, met in Vishinski's chambers to take their part in the preparation of the indictment, into which they introduced some twenty-three references to technical troubles in power plants. The alleged "breakdowns" on Metrovick turbo-generating plant were, for the most part, troubles which under normal circumstances would not be referred to as troubles at all but would be regarded merely as operating difficulties, which were in this case largely due to carelessness and bad operation on the part of the Russian operating staffs themselves. There was nothing in the indictment to cause embarrassment to the Metropolitan Vickers Electrical Co. Ltd. as manufacturers of power-station equipment of the very highest quality.

In preparing their report, the Commission of Technical Experts had before them information supplied by engineers from several large power stations where Metrovick plant was installed, but it should be pointed out that, when these engineers were called upon to give information, they realized that not a few of their colleagues had already been imprisoned by the O.G.P.U. and charged with hiding defects in imported machinery, and consequently they laid the utmost stress on any small defect they could recall as having come to light in the operation of the plant for which they themselves were responsible. Occurrences which had been dismissed from the minds of all concerned years ago, were revived, and introduced into the indictment.

Possibly Vishinski really thought there were

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sufficient grounds to establish a case of wrecking. If so, he was badly misled by the statements of these engineers. In any case, the attitude of the commission of experts themselves is perfectly inexplicable. Three of the commission were men who are well known to me, and the chairman, Golubtsov, is a man with whom I have worked for several years. He is a clever and experienced power-plant engineer who has on more than one occasion visited Great Britain in connection with his work. There is little doubt he must have realized the weakness of the wrecking charges, particularly at the station where he himself is chief engineer, but apparently his technical opinions had been forced to occupy second place to the instructions which had obviously been given to “frame up” a case against the Metrovick engineers. It is also a significant fact that many of the instances named in the indictment are defects which no stretch of imagination could attribute to the acts of individual erection engineers of the Metrovick Company in the U.S.S.R. This fact should have been brought to light in the Court proceedings by the ten questions which I put to the commission of experts. But, unfortunately, the evasive answers which I received were unquestionably dictated by Vishinski’s demands, and not by any sound technical reasoning. Annoyed as I was at the time, I felt sorry for Golubtsov—having to stand up before an open Court and give such answers as representing his considered opinion.

The indictment was a long rambling document of eighty-five typewritten foolscap pages. Its composition, and its contents, were sufficient evidence of the

fact that it had been hurriedly compiled, even if I had not seen Golubtsov, Smirnov, Snedkov, and other engineers whom I knew, sitting late over their efforts in Vishinski's office. A telephone conversation which took place during one of Mr. Thornton's interrogations made it clear beyond doubt that Golubtsov received instructions to assemble the first meeting of the commission of technical experts in the chambers of Comrade Feldman in the O.G.P.U. buildings.

At ten o'clock on April 9th the indictment was handed to us. It was in Russian, and consequently we spent the greater part of the first of the three valuable days allowed between the time it was served to us and the commencement of the Court proceedings in translating it into English. At the same time the originals and one copy of the depositions of all the accused were placed on view at the Supreme Court. The nine defending counsel, Mr. Cushny, Mr. Gregory, Mr. Nordwall and I, contended with each other to get a sight of these documents. I was able to read the depositions of all the British accused, and also Miss Kutusova and Mr. Oleinik, and, having read these "confessions," I returned home to Perlovka on the night of April 11th with misgivings as to the result of the trial for the first time. This was the first that I knew of the astonishing document which my old friend and colleague Mr. Thornton had been forced to write and which was to be made the only "evidence" the Court had against me of spying activities. This was also the first that I knew of Miss Kutusova's having been compelled to make a statement that

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Mr. Thornton had received some 50,000 roubles from the British Consul in Moscow for carrying on the criminal activities with which we were charged. Mr. Oleinik's written depositions filled many pages, and he had gone to considerable pains to incriminate, by insinuation and otherwise, everyone with whom he had come into contact, I also read my own statements when I had been examined at the O.G.P.U., and bit my lip till it bled when I once again realized the temporary weakness I had shown, under pressure from Belogorski, on that awful Sunday evening at the Lubianka. These statements contained the paragraphs Vishinski had agreed to withdraw.

Persons accused in the Courts of the U.S.S.R. are constrained to choose their defending counsel from a panel of lawyers nominated by the Collegium of Defence.

I was told from the outset that no Russian lawyer would very willingly undertake the defence of the British engineers, but, on the other hand, if a lawyer was nominated by any of the accused, he could not refuse to undertake the case. Consequently, four of Moscow's leading lawyers were nominated, and a fifth was ultimately chosen, at their recommendation, to defend Mr. MacDonald.

Subsequent developments, in my own case anyhow, show that these lawyers were only able to defend their clients in so far as it suited the prosecution that they should do so. My own counsel, Komodov, actually pleaded “Guilty,” on my behalf, to the charge of bribery, although I myself had pleaded “Not Guilty.” He did this against

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my instructions and my wishes. His reason for his action, and for the relatively poor defence which he made out of good material he had available, can only be explained in one way, i.e. undue influence from the Prosecution. It must be remembered that, in another trial where foreigners were involved, a Moscow lawyer who did too well for his clients was afterwards found guilty of some small technical offence and banished from the city of Moscow for some years.

Out of forty-two persons whom, it was announced in the Press, the O.G.P.U. had arrested in connection with the affair, only seventeen actually appeared in the dock. The remainder were not put on trial, and many of them have since been liberated without trial. It seems not unreasonable to assume that only those were actually put on trial whom it had been possible to induce to make absurd confessions of complicity in the "framed-up" charge, or who could be relied upon to give evidence against the accused Metrovick engineers. It may be noted that not one of the arrested persons not placed in the dock was called upon to appear as a witness.

It is also worthy of note that one of the Russian engineers accused in the indictment was not put on trial. The reason for this was stated to be that he had contracted typhus. It is perhaps worth recording that, two days before the trial opened, I expressed my opinion to the British *chargé d'affaires* that this engineer would be withdrawn from those in the dock at the last moment. I had formed this opinion after reading the depositions made by him

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during his interrogation and after hearing fragments of conversation in the Public Prosecutor's Office.

There is little doubt that the original intention of the authorities was to stage a much larger trial, but that their intentions were influenced and altered by the prompt and decisive action of the British Government. The necessity of endeavouring to get the case over before the termination of the Temporary Trade Agreement on April 16th was apparently the deciding factor in the decision being reached by the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R.—i.e. the highest organ of the Soviet Government—to set up a Special Session of the Supreme Court to try a limited number of accused only, including all the British. The indictment contains a statement to the effect that “the other members of the counter-revolutionary group of wreckers” are to be the subject of “further investigation.”

The actual arrangements for the trial were elaborate. The Blue Room of the old Hall of the Nobles was the scene of active preparations for several days before the Court assembled. An additional stage was built to accommodate the prisoners' dock and space for prosecuting and defending counsel. Alterations were made outside the Court-room to house those prisoners who were maintained in solitary confinement throughout the trial when not in the Court. A special system of field telephones was installed, and suitable accommodation was made for the foreign Press, the diplomatic corps, etc.

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One thing, however, struck me forcibly when I was conducted into the dock for the first time, and that was the entire absence of red bunting and revolutionary slogans, which almost invariably decorate public meeting-places and Courts in the U.S.S.R. The omission of such decorations, and also the removal of portraits of the revolutionary leaders from the hall during the time of the trial, had obviously been arranged in order to give the Court that air of West-European solemnity which the authorities wished it to have in view of the world-wide attention which had been focused upon it.

Of the proceedings in the Court itself, much has already been written in the British Press. To those of us who were unfortunate enough to be in the dock, the trial rapidly developed itself into a tiring repetition of ridiculous confessions by the Russian accused. One after another they proceeded to the microphone and enumerated their wrecking activities with astonishing readiness. In each case the Prosecution attempted to "establish" the alleged fact that one or other of the British accused had been responsible for tempting Russian engineers from the path of duty, and by the end of the third day the total sum of the moneys which Mr. Thornton was accused of having paid over had mounted up considerably. Two impressions quickly formed themselves in my mind. The first was the fact that Judge Ulrich was obviously not impartial, and lost no opportunity to injure the case of the British engineers. To me, personally, he made two deprecatory remarks, neither of which was included in the verbatim report, but both definitely indicative of his



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antagonistic attitude. The second fact was that obviously Vishinski was the authority who dictated every move of the Court. Judge Ulrich referred to him for guidance on procedure, etc., on every occasion when such matters were raised. Vishinski himself made a slip, in his speech for the Prosecution, which was most illuminating. He was making his final plea for the conviction of the accused, and for the application of the extreme penalty, and, in referring to the Court's having before it the responsibility of making its decision after it had retired to its council room, he used the word *we* instead of *you*. He promptly corrected himself. This was not reported in the verbatim report of the proceedings. As we knew that Vishinski was keeping himself in touch with certain high-placed individuals in the Kremlin, we were not surprised that Judge Ulrich allowed him considerable latitude in the Court.

The unfair methods which Vishinski employed in his endeavour to secure a conviction can perhaps best be illustrated by referring to the charge of spying which was made against me, but on which I was subsequently acquitted. Whilst under examination at the O.G.P.U., I naturally, at first, denied all spying activities, but, when told by Belogorski that the ordinary business usage of keeping oneself informed of developments in the country was political and economic spying, I made a statement that I had indulged in political and economic spying, but carefully qualified my statement, confining my admission to ordinary commercial activities only. Later, when I was examined

by Vishinski, he allowed me to withdraw the statement that I had indulged in "economic and political spying," and state that I had merely made it my business to keep myself informed of such developments as were of interest to my employers in the carrying out of their contracts and in deciding their future policy. Vishinski definitely agreed with me that this was not spying, and, in the statement which I made in his chambers, which I understood was to take the place of the admission I had made in the O.G.P.U., I denied all spying activities, and, in order to make the matter perfectly clear, I added that I understood spying to mean the collecting and communicating of information which was a military or State secret. Vishinski, in his final speech, had the effrontery to refer to my original statement made to the O.G.P.U., which he had agreed to withdraw, and say that I had not dared to deny it. He further stated that I had pretended that I did not know what the word "spying" implied, but had finally been forced to admit that I did know the full meaning of this word and had actually defined it. In other words, he took phrases from two statements, one of which he had agreed to ignore, and put the two phrases together to make a case against me. The verdict showed that even the Court did not feel itself capable of upholding such gross misrepresentation and unfairness as Vishinski showed in this instance.

To me the most convincing evidence of the methods which the O.G.P.U. have used has been the testimony given by my friend and colleague, Mr. Thornton, and by my secretary, Miss Kutusova.

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Mr. Thornton's so-called "confession," in which he admitted being an agent of the British Secret Service and named me as one of those responsible for directing the activities of twenty-six other engineers in a spying organization operating for the British Intelligence Service, is such an outrageous document that even the Moscow Court itself finally disregarded it. What, I wonder, must have been the feelings of Belogorski and his co-inquisitors when they realized that they had overstepped the mark, and had forced, or deceived, Mr. Thornton into signing a document which even the Moscow Court discredited? That the Moscow Court did completely discredit this document was first indicated by a remark which Judge Ulrich addressed to me—when I was making my final statement at the close of the Court proceedings—when I asserted that I was convinced that Mr. Thornton had not signed those documents voluntarily. He said to me, "How do you know what action the Court is going to take in regard to this document?" This remark of Ulrich's is not reported in the verbatim report of the trial, but, nevertheless, is reported in the official British report. Perhaps, however, the best evidence that the Moscow Court finally disregarded Mr. Thornton's "confession" is that I was acquitted of the charge of being associated with spying activities.

With regard to the depositions of Miss Kutusova, it is quite incredible to me that she should have voluntarily made such fantastic and damaging statements as those contained in her depositions. I cannot conceive how Belogorski could be so misguided

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as to force such a ridiculous statement from her as that in which she "confessed" knowing that funds for wrecking and spying activities were received by Mr. Thornton from the British Consul in Moscow. That this particular "admission" was suppressed in the Court, when I endeavoured to drag it into the proceedings, was further evidence that the O.G.P.U. allowed their zeal to overcome their judgment.

Mr. Cushny's statement recently published in *The Times* provides ample evidence of the methods which are employed to secure these depositions, but there is little doubt that in the case of Miss Kutusova, who is a Russian subject, the O.G.P.U. would resort to what is established practice in such cases, and threaten to extend their repressive measures to her near relatives if she did not comply with their wishes and sign the false depositions required of her.

One or two incidents occurred during the Court proceedings which I feel it necessary to explain in view of certain criticisms which have recently been published. The first has reference to the "outburst" which I am credited with having made on the morning of April 15th. It has been stated by Mr. Cummings, in his recently published book dealing with the trial, that this outburst was ill-timed, and should in any case have been left to my defending counsel to make. I think that all who realized what was happening in the Court will appreciate that my so-called outburst was not ill-timed. The whole case was so obviously what I claimed it to be, i.e. a "frame-up," that it was

imperative to let the Court and the world know that we regarded it in that light, and in that light only. The evidence of Sukhoruchkin, which the Court had heard on the previous evening, was, to the minds of trained power-station engineers, utterly ridiculous, and yet the Court and many foreign correspondents had apparently taken it seriously.

To me Sukhoruchkin's evidence was especially painful, because I knew Sukhoruchkin for an honest and conscientious engineer, and I was absolutely convinced in my own mind that he was innocent of the ridiculous and relatively insignificant charges to which he had “confessed.” I felt equally prepared to make the same statement regarding certain of the other Russian accused who were tried with us in the dock. I felt certain that there was no real substance in the charges brought against any of the prisoners, but I was not in a position to form a sound judgment in the case of four of the Russian accused, because, although they were alleged to be associated with me in a wrecking organization, I had never seen them until they entered the dock, and, in fact, I had never even heard of three of them until I saw their names in the list of the accused. The parrot-like manner in which all of the accused Russian engineers had given their false testimonies had irritated me almost beyond endurance.

The so-called “outburst” which I made was planned on the previous evening, and made deliberately with the agreement of all my colleagues. I mentioned it to my counsel, and he did his utmost

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to dissuade me from making it, telling me that such a direct attack on the Court's procedure would lead to my being severely punished. I ignored his advice, but nevertheless took the precaution of taking a packed suit-case to Court that morning, because I certainly expected to be re-arrested. I am inclined to give Judge Ulrich the credit for considerable tolerance, in this instance, in not having taken more drastic action to punish a deliberate contempt of his Court.

The second point is with regard to my own examination in chief. I had expected that Vishinski would question me with regard to the more serious charges brought against me in the indictment, and particularly with reference to the document, which Mr. Thornton had signed, naming me as one of the organizers of spying activities in the U.S.S.R. In this connection I was looking forward to a lively fight with Vishinski and his colleagues in the Court, but he had apparently somehow become fully aware of this, and most unexpectedly he sent me back to my seat in the dock without ever having questioned me on the most serious evidence brought against me in the indictment. I was deeply chagrined at thus losing the opportunity, for which I had been waiting, to support the criticism which I had made of the Court earlier in the day.

During Vishinski's final speech for the Prosecution he made a reference to my late colleague and chief, Engineer Anthony Simon, which was definitely unfair, both to the memory of Mr. Simon and to me. It is true that, whilst at the O.G.P.U., I was asked much about Mr. Simon's work during

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the initial period of trade relations between Great Britain and U.S.S.R. I cannot now recall exactly what was written in the protocols of this examination, but whatever it was that Vishinski found there upon which to base his remarks he was misled into making the accusations he did against an engineer who is no longer able to defend his character and his honour. In my final remarks I had intended to dwell at length upon this particular point, and clear my late chief's name of any implications which had been made against him, but, unfortunately, events in the Court moved so quickly on the morning of April 19th that we who were prisoners in the dock were not given the time we were led to believe we would be given to prepare our final remarks, and consequently I omitted to lay proper stress on this and other points which I had intended to cover.

In this latter connection, I might say that we had been definitely told by our counsel that the prisoners would not be asked to say their last words, which Russian legal procedure permits them, until the evening session on April 19th, and therefore my own notes for this vital part of the proceedings were in the ante-room with my papers when I was called to the microphone. I had therefore to speak from memory. Other points which I omitted now have little importance, but that which I have referred to above causes me much regret, and hence I have found it necessary to refer to it here at length.

At the commencement of the preceding chapter I have indicated what appears to me to be the

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motive which the authorities in Moscow had when they decided to frame up a charge against my colleagues and myself, and find us guilty, on the false evidence of terrorized engineers and prisoners, of serious crimes against the U.S.S.R. Personally I am inclined to think that there was a short period when the O.G.P.U. did genuinely imagine that certain members of the Metrovick organization were associated with the British Intelligence Service, until this allegation was finally disproved by Sir John Simon's statement in the House of Commons. If this was the case, the O.G.P.U. would be under the impression that if the men whom they believed were agents of the British Intelligence Service were introduced into their staged trial charged with spying, the British Government would not intercede for them for very obvious reasons. This fact probably emboldened the O.G.P.U. in their decision to proceed. The strong action taken by the British Government must therefore have seriously shaken their original plans in this connection.

Another feature which came to light when I was under preliminary examination by Vishinski was that neither he nor Feldman appreciated the fact that the Metropolitan Vickers Electrical Co. Ltd. were not one and the same firm as the world-renowned armament firm of Vickers-Armstrongs Ltd. The charges against Mr. Thornton and Mr. MacDonald of spying at the Zlatoust Armament Works might never have been formulated if the O.G.P.U. and Vishinski had appreciated this point at an earlier date.

It only remains to be said that the Soviet



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Government has allowed its responsible agents—the Economic Department of the O.G.P.U., the Public Prosecutor of the R.S.F.S.R. and finally Judge Ulrich of the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R.—to organize and stage a trial which has been correctly described as a travesty of justice, and which has, without doubt, discredited their Government and their country in the eyes of the civilized world.

As one who has made it his duty to understand the aims, ideals and objects of the Soviet Government, and has done his utmost to interpret this knowledge of the U.S.S.R. to promote a better understanding between Great Britain and that country, and, moreover, has done everything he reasonably could be expected to do to assist in the fulfilment of the vast plans of the State Planning Department, it is indeed a bitter disappointment to see the Soviet Government become a prey to fanaticism and class hatred to such an extent as to allow itself to be led into a blunder of this kind.

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IN ACCORDANCE with the requirements of legal procedure in the U.S.S.R. the verdict at trials, such as that held in Moscow in April, must be written out by hand by the judge himself. This probably accounted for the long delay, which occurred on April 18th, in preparing a verdict which was apparently dictated by political considerations and bore little reference to what had occurred during the actual hearing in the Court. Clearly the Soviet authorities were faced with the dilemma of having to justify before their own nationals the ridiculous action which had been taken by the O.G.P.U. in commencing the proceedings, and at the same time avoid offending public opinion abroad as a whole and in Great Britain in particular. Although the Russians accused had sworn to crimes which under normal procedure in the U.S.S.R. need no trial to earn the extreme penalty at the hands of the O.G.P.U. executioners, and although the Court found them guilty of such crimes, they were given sentences which will result in their being free citizens again in a very short time. The sentences on the British accused can be regarded virtually as acquittals. Mr. Thornton repudiated his "confession" in the Court. His repudiation however, was only partially effective, due to the unfairness of Vishinski's attack and the "inspired" weakness of his counsel. Although Mr. MacDonald declared his

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guilt before the Court on two occasions he was clearly absolutely innocent of the charges brought against him. His attempt to withdraw his plea of guilty failed, and I feel certain that if ever the truth regarding his action is made public the entire sympathies of all who know the facts will be with him.

The reading of the verdict was completed at 1.17 a.m. on April 19th, 1933. According to the verdict, the Court acquitted me on the spying charges and convicted me of having knowledge of the wrecking activities of Mr. Thornton without having reported the fact to the Soviet authorities, and also of complicity in a bribery transaction. This conviction does not greatly disturb me, because I have known Mr. Thornton sufficiently long to know that anything of the nature of wrecking activities is so far removed from his natural temperament that he could not be guilty of such crimes. As far as the bribery conviction is concerned, I am in possession of more than sufficient evidence to prove that the only transaction which even the O.G.P.U. could find, after the most careful investigation of my books and my private diaries, and which could in any way be interpreted as bribery, was originally entered into as a personal loan. This loan had been ultimately written off as a "bad debt" when the money was not returned.

. . . . .

It was with a very heavy heart that I signed an undertaking to leave the U.S.S.R. within seventy-two hours of the verdicts being pronounced.

On the day following the conclusion of the trial

I applied for passports for myself and my colleagues to leave Moscow at once, and, despite the fact that every newspaper had published the verdict of the Court, the authorities told me to leave the passports and call again in four days' time. Ignoring my protests, they persisted in their characteristically bureaucratic attitude, and hence I went straight to Judge Ulrich and asked his assistance. I was received with exaggerated politeness, and my additional request for a signed copy of the sentence which he had pronounced on the previous evening was not refused, even though I made it clear that I wanted this as a "souvenir."

Before concluding the summary of my impressions of the Moscow Trial, I would like to repeat the words which I said on arrival at Liverpool Street Station on Sunday, April 23rd, 1933 :

"During the last two or three weeks in Moscow we have been so preoccupied with events there that I am afraid we have failed to appreciate the amount of interest and sympathy that our case has aroused on this side of the Russian frontier. It was therefore a great surprise to us, when we reached Stolpce, to find two aeroplanes and a battery of cameramen to meet us. The receptions which we have had as we have crossed Europe on our way to England have also surprised us, and we are exceedingly touched by the welcome which we have received here this morning. We much appreciate the sympathy and kindness which have been extended to us.

"In conveying our gratitude we must first express our thanks for what has been done by His Majesty's Government, and in particular that part of it of

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which we have seen most at our end. It would be quite wrong not to express our appreciation for all that has been done for us by the British Embassy in Moscow, and particularly the efforts made during the last three weeks by Mr. Strang, the British *chargé d'affaires*. There was hardly a night when Mr. Strang got to bed before three or four in the morning, and yet every day when we took our places in the prisoners' dock his smile was always there to greet us.

"We also express our appreciation of the confidence which our Company have placed in us and the support which we have had from them. The Press, particularly the representatives of the British and American Press, we wish to thank for the way in which they have put our case before the public. We also thank them for many personal kindnesses which they have shown us in the way of conveying information to our anxious families and relatives at home.

"Finally, may I say how glad we all are to be back home once more in Great Britain? It is a significant fact that of the four of us who have returned this morning, none of us was born in England, and yet we all look upon it as 'Home' with a capital 'H.' Just one last word. I want to express the deep regret we feel that only four of us and not six of us are here. We hope the other two will be home very soon."

It will be a life-long regret to me that in the excitement of the welcome I omitted to include the name of Sir Esmond Ovey in expressing what is a very scanty appreciation of the great efforts His Majesty's

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Foreign Office made to secure our fair trial and release. It was clearly largely due to Sir Esmond Ovey's early appreciation of the real situation that O.G.P.U. were frustrated in their efforts to bring the "frame up" trial to a conclusion which would have been more satisfactory to their own prestige.

The short reference which I made to the British and American Press did not completely express my great appreciation of the consideration which was shown to my colleagues and myself by its representatives in Moscow both before and during the trial. On several occasions we had long talks with representatives of the Press which would obviously have made good "copy" but which it was clearly understood were "off the reel" and were therefore never reported. As an example of the fair play which characterized the actions of the British and American Press men in Moscow I would like to record the action of Mr. Lionel Wells, who at noon on Sunday, March 12th, found himself in sole possession of the whole detailed story of our arrest. His temptation to send this "scoop" to his own group of papers, without divulging what he knew to his colleagues in the Press corps, must have been great, but instead of doing so he summoned all his competitors and put them in possession of the facts before despatching his own reports. It was thus clear that he realized the seriousness and the importance of what had transpired from the moment the news of the arrests became known to him.

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Amongst the many happy recollections of our return to England I must not fail to mention the

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pleasure and satisfaction with which we heard of the message which His Majesty the King had sent to the Chairman of the Metropolitan Vickers Electrical Co. Ltd., asking him to convey to us His Majesty's gratification at our safe return to England and his hope that our two colleagues who were still imprisoned in Moscow might also soon return home. On the same day that this message was received, my colleague Mr. Cushny and I had the honour of recounting our experiences personally to H.R.H. the Prince of Wales at St. James's Palace.

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Those who have read the foregoing somewhat brief summary of the many impressions left on my mind by twenty-two years' close association with the peoples of the lands which now constitute the U.S.S.R. will doubtless feel that they have read much which they already knew and also many apparently contradictory statements regarding the success or otherwise of the great experiment now in progress in that country.

An impression of paradoxical conditions is exactly what I have desired to convey. It is possible to find much that is good and is to be admired in the U.S.S.R. to-day, but, on the other hand, there is much occurring in that country which is so far removed from our ideas of Christian ethics and decent feelings that no words are strong enough to condemn the actions of those responsible for such a state of affairs.

The task which the Soviet Government, under the rigid control of the Communist Party Executive,

has set itself, is that of ultimately establishing a new civilization based on principles which they ascribe to Karl Marx but which have figured in the teachings of many philosophers from the time of Plato onwards.

From the outset Lenin and his followers emphasized the necessity of breaking down and demolishing entirely the old existing régime and all that it stood for, and building a new Communist régime from the ground upwards. Thus it is that the Communist Party Executive in Moscow have considered it necessary to insist on the Soviet Government organizing and maintaining a powerful O.G.P.U. which has been entrusted with the work of breaking down the old régime and destroying the "remnants of a dying imperialist and capitalist system," although at the same time it has forced forward a programme of capital construction and development which has called for sacrifices which are almost greater than the people of the U.S.S.R. can support.

The O.G.P.U. has been allowed excessive latitude in carrying out its part of the programme of the Communist Party Executive, and in its fanatical desire to eradicate all anti-Soviet influences, and prevent what it interprets to be counter-revolutionary activities, it only too frequently attacks and punishes innocent citizens who have loyally supported the Soviet Government in the great work which it has undertaken. This has particularly been the case during recent years, when those in control of the situation have considered it necessary to find scapegoats for errors and failures which have occurred in the carrying into execution



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success which the O.G.P.U. claims to have achieved in this particular case may easily lead to a wider extension of the principle involved. The dangers of a system which permits abuses of this kind are too vital to be disregarded, and have rightly been emphasized by many who have strenuously attacked the Soviet Government for permitting such gross interference with the freedom of its citizens. Unfortunately the conditions on the White Sea-Baltic Canal are not confined to that great work alone. The actual number of those engaged in the O.G.P.U.'s compulsory labour camps is without doubt greater than the slave population of the Southern States which Abraham Lincoln fought to free.

Alongside the blot on modern civilization which this state of affairs existing in the U.S.S.R. constitutes, we find the constructive activities of the Soviet Government providing a great deal which can be regarded with sympathy and much deserving of praise.

The tasks which the State Planning Commission set themselves in the first Five Year Plan, and the results of their efforts to bring the Plan into fruition, have been already dealt with. Briefly summarizing these, it may be said that the Soviet Government has failed to replace the ruined peasant industries, and has thus not been in a position to supply the consumable commodities which it requires in order to persuade the peasants to part with their agricultural products and also to enable the industrial and constructional workers to spend their earnings. To overcome the difficulties thus created, grain

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collection systems, involving great hardships in the villages, have been resorted to, and in the industrial towns and cities the prices of food and such commodities as are available have been greatly increased in order to prevent currency accumulating in the pockets of the workers.

In the developments which come under the supervision of the Commissariat of Heavy Industries a distinction must be made between those which may be called the basic, or really heavy, industries, including the metallurgical and mining industries, and the light machine and apparatus manufacturing industries, which have been organized on modern mass production lines. In the case of the former, failure to achieve anything approaching the Plan figures is everywhere to be found, and many millions of pounds' worth of valuable modern equipment is virtually standing idle. In the light machine building and mass production factories, such as those producing lamps, telephones, etc., the situation is much more satisfactory, and in many cases the volume and quality of the output being obtained is reasonably good.

In agriculture the plans of the Soviet Government have definitely failed to produce the results anticipated. Soviet authorities robbed the land of its agricultural specialists when they banished the more successful and wealthier peasants to the compulsory labour camps. They have organized some 200,000 collective farms under the management of inexperienced youths, whose chief qualifications are of a political nature, and of ne'er-do-well peasantry. The peasants working on the

collective farms cannot be persuaded to evince that interest in their work which they displayed under private ownership. They have ceased to trust the Government's good intentions, and look with suspicion on the decrees or legislation which the authorities introduce from time to time to encourage them to exert again their fullest energies to producing agricultural products. On the State farms the Soviet Government are having some degree of success, but these enterprises are a long way from giving the yield they were calculated to produce. The small number of peasants who still remain private owners are unlikely to cultivate sufficient produce appreciably to affect the economic position. The Communist Party Executive and the Soviet Government are doing everything in their power to overcome the threatening situation. The methods which they are employing at the present moment (August 1933) to ensure a supply of grain for the cities and the industrial workers during the coming winter have the appearance of being inspired by their realization of an almost desperate position. Reports of famine conditions already come from many districts, and there is little doubt there is some foundation for such reports. Serious as the situation appears, it must not, however, be assumed that it will necessarily lead to political changes. Kalinin is reported as having said that the peasants have brought the trouble on themselves ; and it would be quite in keeping with the general attitude of those in authority in Moscow if they confine themselves to ensuring that the cities and the industrial workers are



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sufficiently fed with products from the State farms and the successful collective farms and allow the remainder of the peasantry to "eat the porridge they have prepared for themselves."

In organizing distribution of commodities, the original plans of the State Planning Department have not proved entirely satisfactory. Numerous distribution schemes have been tried out, but as supplies have become scarcer the difficulties of distribution appear to have increased. At the present moment there is very little that can be bought in Moscow without either ration cards or a special purchasing permission from recognized authorities. There are, however, a number of so-called "commercial" stores where the State-organized co-operatives sell products freely at many times the nominal prices ruling in the ordinary co-operative stores. These stores are merely another means of ensuring that currency does not accumulate in the pockets of the workers. Foreigners are constrained to make their purchases at special Torgsin stores, where only gold and foreign currency are accepted in payment for purchases made.

The educational and social welfare activities of the Soviet authorities are definitely one of the brighter sides of their programme, and it is not surprising that visitors from Western Europe who are shown the educational institutions of Moscow, Leningrad, Harkov and other centres, or who are conducted through some of the great hospitals, maternity homes, crèches and similar institutions in those cities, are duly impressed. They do not

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realize that those who study in the educational institutions may become highly proficient in technical studies and may even become disciplined Communists but they are ignorant of all those attributes which enable the British public school boy to occupy the position he does in the life of the world. Devoid of tradition, lacking in *esprit de corps*, taught to trust no one but a fellow-Communist, encouraged and expected to ignore and despise religion, deliberately misinformed regarding the conditions of living existing in foreign countries, and encouraged to boast of the alleged successes of the Soviet Government in the carrying into effect of its plans, the younger generation of Russian students deserve the sympathies of their more fortunate confrères in the universities and colleges of Western Europe and America.

In the development of hospital and social services the Soviet Government have quite naturally and rightly adopted all that is best from post-war experience in Great Britain, Germany and other West European countries, with the result that much good work has been done. The trouble, however, lies in that there is not enough trained personnel to extend this work throughout the whole of the U.S.S.R. as quickly as desirable. A serious shortage of medical supplies is also embarrassing the medical profession in the U.S.S.R.

It would be wrong to conclude this brief résumé of conditions in the U.S.S.R. without a reference to the immense importance which the Soviet Government is attaching to scientific research work. In every branch of industry very extensive research

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laboratories have been built and equipped, and some tens of thousands of scientific workers of all kinds are finding employment in these laboratories. The results of this far-sighted policy will probably only become fully evident some years hence. At the moment the vast majority of those employed in this work are covering ground already covered by research workers in other parts of the world. The Russian student is by nature a research worker, and Russia has in the past provided the world with many of its finest scientists. It is more than reasonable to expect that the encouragement which the Soviet Government is now giving to research work in the form of extensive grants and well-equipped laboratories will result in developments of importance.

Facilities for physical training and recreation are, on the whole, reasonably good, and in the larger cities are definitely excellent. Most of the physical training and sports institutions are run in conjunction with local Party organizations or branches of the League for Aviation and Chemical Defence—"Osoaviachim"—which is an ostensibly voluntary league of young people that now numbers many millions, and which had for its main object the teaching of aeronautics and chemical warfare. The cities of U.S.S.R. all possess extensive parks of culture and rest, where every provision is made for instructing the younger generation in politics, economics and sports.

It might be pointed out that at the present time the great bulk of the young people of the cities and towns are called upon to devote three evenings a



week to communal work of one kind or another. This undoubtedly affords the young Communists good training for the work which they have ahead of them. The duties which they are called upon to perform as evening tasks include teaching, instructing illiterate peasants, and even labouring on municipal or co-operative works.

In the matter of religion, the new States which have grown up under the Soviets on the territories of old Russia cannot be enumerated amongst the world's Christian countries. Despite the Soviet Government's claim that it has established religious freedom, the priests of the Church remain defranchised and deprived of ration cards. Their children cannot receive a higher education. Church-goers are looked upon with suspicion, and in many cases church attendance has been sufficient excuse to involve dismissal when State institutions have been subjected to their periodic "purgings" and staff reductions.

Anti-religious propaganda is everywhere to be found, the dignitaries of the Christian Churches being shown on posters and in the anti-religious publications as being hand in glove with the great financiers. Personally I always feel that the Soviet propaganda authorities are decidedly crude and unnecessarily venomous in their anti-religious and anti-capitalist propaganda of this kind. The posters frequently displayed in the U.S.S.R. ascribing hideous and bloated figures and claw-like hands to those who are portrayed as representing financiers, and licentious faces to the clergy and the leaders of the Christian Churches, surely do more harm

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than good to the Communist cause. It is noticeable that one seldom finds similar attacks made on the Mahommedan religion, although the Mahommedan population of the U.S.S.R. is large.

It would appear that Lenin and his associates made one of their most serious errors when they permitted atheism to become a necessary qualification for membership of the Russian Communist Party. I believe that they would have found a very much larger following if they had contented themselves with denouncing the Russian Orthodox Church and permitted the establishment of a new religious movement which might have been described as "Christian-Communism." If the new social order which the Soviet Government is struggling to establish is ultimately to prove successful it would seem necessary that it should abandon the dangerous and demoralizing principles of atheism and materialism, substituting for them a creed which acknowledges the Divine Purpose and accepts Christ amongst its inspired teachers.

Closely allied to the question of religious oppression are the much-discussed marriage and divorce laws of the U.S.S.R. It is true that both marriage and divorce are regarded merely as matters of proper registration, involving the payment of a few shillings and the signing of a form. The time and trouble involved are comparable with that required to renew a driving licence in Great Britain. In claiming divorce it is sufficient for one party only to register the annulment of the marriage. The law makes proper provision for the payment of alimony to support any children there may have been of

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the marriage. It is a significant fact that the Russian people do not as a rule avail themselves of the extraordinary freedom of action which the legislation permits. The marriage tie in present-day U.S.S.R. is reasonably permanent.

The younger people in the U.S.S.R. are relatively happy in their ignorance of pre-revolutionary and outside conditions and in their belief that they are assisting rapidly to build a State and a civilization which will be better than anything the world has yet known. Generally speaking, the older generation who have known infinitely better conditions fail to share the optimism of their children. They continue to live in the past, and their criticism of the new régime is not infrequently extremely outspoken. This observation particularly applies to the peasants.

In preparing this account of my impressions of the U.S.S.R. I have deliberately omitted detailed reference to the Red Army and the Soviet Press. Both are subjects on which I have not the necessary knowledge or experience to speak authoritatively.

In the U.S.S.R. all men are liable for military service between the ages of twenty and forty years. Women are also liable for service in case of national emergency. There is a regular army, of which the total number has been officially returned as being about half a million men, but this does not take into consideration Territorial units, the Osoaviachim movement and various specialized corps. The military parades which take place in Moscow and other cities on May 1st and November 7th each year are calculated to impress the foreigner

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and the Russian public with the strength and efficiency of the forces which Voroshelov commands. On May 1st, 1932, I watched an air display over Moscow in which over three hundred aeroplanes took part, whilst an imposing display of tanks, artillery and other mobile war equipment shook the ground where Lenin lies as it passed the saluting base on the Red Square. The Soviet authorities have consistently claimed that their preparations are being made to defend the U.S.S.R. from the attack which they profess to fear. It is perfectly obvious that for many years to come the Soviet Union has everything to gain by a period of world peace, and preparation for offensive war on their part would definitely be against the interests of the Communist Party leaders in all countries.

The printing presses of the U.S.S.R. produce an immense amount of printed matter. Some of the technical publications are distinctly good, but, apart from these, the great bulk of the literature produced is of a quasi-instructive nature, flavoured strongly with Communist propaganda. Comparatively few novels are published, and such works of this kind as do appear are almost invariably written with the object of showing the heroes and heroines as loyal Soviet workers.

The Press of the U.S.S.R. is nothing other than the two leading papers *Izvestia* and *Pravda* claim themselves to be, i.e. mouthpieces for Stalin's oligarchy. The full title of the *Izvestia* is the "News of the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R., and of the Moscow Soviet," and the sub-title of

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*Pravda* states that it is the official organ of the Central and the Moscow Communist (Bolshevik) Party organizations. Neither paper claims to be free to express opinions or views other than those acceptable to the Kremlin, and under present-day conditions in Moscow it would be difficult to find a news editor who would include even news items in these papers which might be regarded by the ever-watchful O.G.P.U. censors as being detrimental to the interests of the Soviet Government.

. . . . .

In short, the U.S.S.R. is a land of paradoxes. Political and social welfare enthusiasts visiting it usually find there what they have hoped to find, irrespective of what their political views may be. In September 1932 a contribution to the *New Statesman* over the name of MacFlecknoe aptly expressed the attitude of many of those who return from short sojourns in the U.S.S.R., in the following verses :

Mr. A. B. (of the I.L.P.)  
He went to Russia  
To learn the Truth about Russia  
(The regeneration of Russia).  
And the sights that he selected  
Bore out what he expected—  
Great factories rising ;  
An enthusiasm surprising  
For welfare and education ;  
A New World in formation  
Much better than the Old—  
Just as he had foretold.

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Mr. R. S. (who reads the *Express*)  
He also went to Russia  
To learn the Truth about Russia  
(The approaching collapse of Russia).  
And (all contradictions rejected)  
He saw what he expected—  
Breakdowns in transportation ;  
A growing indignation  
With the Communist oppression ;  
A steady retrogression  
To chaos, bloody and red—  
Just as he had always said.

And I, who read them both,  
Have taken a solemn oath  
To believe no " Truth about Russia "  
(Friendly or hostile to Russia)  
Which harnesses every fact  
• To a formula exact ;  
And proves, in the end, to be  
What the writer had wished to see.

For many years I have studied developments in the U.S.S.R. with the closest interest, and have done my utmost to understand the aims and objects of the Communist Party Executive and those who rule in the U.S.S.R. at their bidding. I have shared the optimistic hopes of those who were responsible for the first Five Year Plan. I believed the Plan would be a success, and I have done my utmost to foster closer and better business relations between Great Britain and the U.S.S.R. The failures which have made themselves apparent during recent months, and which have given rise to the fanatical search for scapegoats, one of the many results of which has become known as the Moscow Trial, have proved to me that my optimism was not entirely justified. I had failed to make allowance for the inhuman and relentless determination which

the apostles of Marxian materialism in Moscow would evince when they found that their errors in policy had brought them into conflict with the peasants and that their vast industrial schemes were failing to mature as rapidly as their optimism had allowed them to expect.

I believe that the Soviet Government will continue to rule the vast and rich country over which the red flag waves, and I believe that it will ultimately surmount its present difficulties ; but I feel it necessary to add that in the immediate future the peoples of the U.S.S.R. are faced with conditions of living which will be so far below the poverty-line that we must expect them to be described in our Press as starvation and famine. The Russian people are the involuntary victims of a colossal experiment. There are those who contend that we can ourselves profit from the failures and successes of the Soviet régime in the U.S.S.R. in the solution of the problems, national and international, which beset us. To a certain extent this contention is true, but we must not forget that Russia in 1917 was an illiterate and undeveloped country, and that even to this day its citizens have neither the education nor the experience necessary to make the results of the experiment of any appreciable value in drawing comparisons with conditions in Western Europe or in America.

The Soviet Government claim that the programme which they are endeavouring to carry into being has now gone beyond the stage when it can be referred to and regarded as an experiment. In many ways it would be satisfactory to feel that this

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is true, but recent developments and changes in Moscow indicate that those who dictate in the Kremlin are far from satisfied with the results of their efforts.

Whatever may be the ultimate outcome of events in the U.S.S.R., we must give the Communist Party authorities and the Soviet Government the credit for having tackled a great problem with energy and thoroughness. It is my considered opinion that the majority of the men responsible in the Kremlin are acting sincerely and in accordance with their convictions, and are neither seeking personal power nor self-enrichment.

The question invariably arises as to whether or not other powers whose moral and legal codes are based on Christian ethics should maintain diplomatic and commercial relations with the Moscow Government in view of the fact that it is the avowed object of their political chiefs to carry their revolutionary activities into all countries.

Although it is impossible to justify many of the methods which the Communist Party Executive have advocated and which the Soviet authorities and the O.G.P.U. have adopted, it would seem clear that the outside world are not justified in cutting themselves off entirely from the U.S.S.R. The industrial developments which are taking place in that country must ultimately result in an improved standard of living for its people, and it is the Russian people—the hundred and forty-seven million who do not live in the Kremlin and the palatial residences of the O.G.P.U.—who deserve our sympathies and, where possible, our help.



The Soviet Government will proceed with its vast plans. It will continue to export its timber, oil, manganese, flax and certain agricultural products in return for which it requires machinery and equipment.

In Great Britain to-day we cannot afford to refuse to accept the work for our industries which the requirements of the U.S.S.R. provide, even although we may regard the political tactics of the Communist Party authorities with the strongest disfavour, and look with horror and disgust on the actions of over-zealous agents of the O.G.P.U.

To my mind the only question which arises in this connection is that of ensuring that the financial position of the Soviet Government is such that payments for goods and equipment purchased are reasonably certain to be made in their proper time. It must be borne in mind that the Soviet Government has embarked on its enormous capital construction schemes without having been in a position to raise long-term loans in London, Paris, New York or elsewhere, in the way that most young and developing countries have done in the past. For this reason the purchasing organizations of the Soviet Government have done what they can to procure from individual firms and suppliers credits extending over a period of from two to five years. Up to the present time there has been no question of the Soviet Government failing to meet their obligations ; and those of us who have had an opportunity of coming into contact with the State departments in Moscow, which distribute the available foreign resources amongst the many State organizations which

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clamour to be allowed to purchase equipment from abroad, cannot but feel reassured by the extraordinary caution displayed. It would be fairly safe to assume that not even the smallest purchase is now made without a definite allocation being made in Moscow to allow it to be paid for in accordance with its conditions of sale.

The rapid fall during the past two years in the ruling prices of the majority of the raw materials which the U.S.S.R. exports has unquestionably embarrassed the finance authorities in Moscow very considerably ; and they have been compelled to adopt many unusual practices to obtain foreign credits and also to ensure that such foreign currency and convertible assets as they have in their own country are utilized to the best advantage.

The fact that the Moscow authorities have found it necessary to make special provision to ensure that every possible pennyworth of foreign currency is left in the U.S.S.R. by tourists and others visiting their country indicates how great is their need for credits abroad. Nevertheless, I remain sufficiently optimistic to feel that the U.S.S.R. will continue to meet its obligations. On the other hand, the amount of their purchases must necessarily be only a fraction of what they purchased in the past, until they have been able to meet the immense commitments they took upon themselves whilst purchasing equipment for the first Five Year Plan.



